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Group Counseling with Underachievers

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GROUP COUNSELING WITH UNDERACHIEVERS

by

Sister Mary Frederick Arnold, C.S.J.

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

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Life

Sister Mary Frederick Arnold, C.S.J. was born in San Diego, California in 1930. After graduating from Our Lady of Peace Academy in San Diego, she entered the Novitiate of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet in Los Angeles, California. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Mount Saint Mary's College, Los Angeles, in 1956, and until 1961, taught in the Los Angeles Archdiocese. Sister began graduate work at Loyola University, Chicago, in 1961, and in 1965 she received her Master of Arts Degree in clinical psychology. From 1963 to 1964 she did her doctoral internship in clinical psychology at the Northwestern University Medical School.

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Chapter I

Statement of the Problem

One of the growing concerns among educators today is the problem of dealing with underachievers. Much potential talent is lost because these individuals do not learn to function to their capacity, yet few effective means have been found to assist such students.

In recent years, a good deal of research has focused on personality dynamics of underachievers, and the findings have indicated that anxiety, hostility, aggression, and insecurity are often concomitant with the "poor scholarship syndrome." Kunst (1959) has gone so far as to attribute failure in school to an "active, though unconscious, resistance to learning." (p. 95)

But while much has been written on dynamic factors involved in underachievement, there has, to date, been little systematized effort to study the effects of treatment on individuals who do not achieve up to their capacity. If underachievers do manifest some of the personality difficulties mentioned here, then it would seem feasible to employ a counseling approach with those showing deficiencies in achievement in order to aim treatment at the 'cause' as well as the 'symptom.' Counseling, in this sense, might also be seen as a means of warding off more serious neurotic difficulties before they have taken firm roots.

From another point of view, it has been noted that adolescents have a great need for peer group acceptance. They tend to be 'other' oriented in the sense of needing approval from others in their actions. Their 'needs' often must be filled from without. For the case in point here, it seems that for underachieving adolescents a group counseling approach might well provide a fulfillment of these needs while at the same time helping the participants to work through some of the negative feelings that are preventing fruitful application of their talents. From a practical point of view, such an approach can also facilitate a solution to one of the greatest problems inherent in counseling--that of the time element in relation to the limited staff.

Developing the thought still further, it might be noted that while adolescents tend to have a great need for acceptance from their peers, yet at the same time, they are caught in the struggle of growth towards maturity. They are endeavoring to 'actualize' themselves as persons, to become independent in their thinking, to 'become' individuals. Ackerman (1955) has observed that one of the most striking aspects of adolescents' behavior in therapy is their "yearning to complete their incomplete selves." (p. 249) Group counseling, then, might further be looked upon as an experience which can assist adolescent underachievers to gain more confidence in themselves--to 'become' individuals--by providing what Ackerman (1955) refers to as a social testing ground for (testing) the distorted and inappropriate perceptions they have of themselves. Through such a process, they can hopefully come to understand more clearly their pattern of behavior in 'putting on a front' and/or 'acting out' against authority to gain peer acceptance. Then,

through recognition and experienced support, they can be helped to lessen dependency on others for the satisfaction of their needs and to increase reliance on their own inner resources and potentialities.

Maslow (1954) has viewed the process of psychotherapy in a similar manner, seeing the self-actualized person as the end product of such an experience, yet recognizing "need gratification" (referring here to the "deficiency needs" that can be satisfied only by other human beings) as one of the most important steps toward this goal.

Going on the assumption then that underachievement in school is related to personality problems and anxiety, and encouraged by the positive results shown in a small pilot study, it was the investigator's purpose here to explore the fruitfulness of a group counseling approach with underachieving female high school students. Seniors were chosen as subjects of the present study, since it was felt that being faced with the immediate reality of having to make important decisions on future schooling and life commitments, they would share a common concern and would be more likely to experience an immediate need for counseling than those not faced with problems of such current import.

Since emotional problems are seen to manifest themselves in underachievement in many ways, it seemed that counseling sessions aimed at helping the individuals to understand and to accept themselves should effect growth not only in attitudes toward the self, but in school achievement as well. The present study has attempted to test this hypothesis. This research was also aimed at assessing the motivational patterns of underachievers and seeing if specific needs were related to improvement or lack of improvement as a

result of group counseling. Would, for example, girls with high social needs be more likely than others to experience a 'satisfaction' of their needs in group sessions, and thus to show greater positive growth? Would those motivated by a great need for independence or a need for novelty view school achievement as a means of 'conforming' and hence shy away from it? On the basis of clinical observation, Richardson (1964) suggested the likelihood of such individual differences. He did not test them empirically, however.

Specifically, then, the following research hypotheses were tested in the present study:

1. Female underachievers show a significant gain in grade point average as a result of participation in group counseling.
2. Female underachievers show a growth in self-actualization as a result of participation in group counseling.
3. Female underachievers show greater congruence between the way they perceive themselves and the way they would like to be as a result of participation in group counseling.
4. Female underachievers who improve as a result of group counseling manifest different motivational patterns than those who do not show improvement.

Chapter II

Review of the Related Literature

Studies Relating Personality Dynamics to Underachievement. In recent years there has been a good deal of research focused on the relationships between personality dynamics, motivation, and achievement. In the past, underachievement was attributed mainly to poor study habits and to lack of 'drive' but more current findings have shown the 'underachievement syndrome' to be related to a deeper level of the personality structure.

Snider (1953) tried to identify some of the factors motivating achievement and his study of a group of high school seniors demonstrated among other things that underachievers were self-oriented, that they saw goals in terms of self gratification, that they were concerned with immediate results and were impatient about delay, that they acted impulsively in the face of frustrating stimuli, that they tended to shift the blame for their failure onto others, and that they expected success with a minimum of work. This group were also more adaptable socially and more spontaneous than a matched group of high achievers. Snider studied only extremes on the achievement continuum, however. The value of Snider's approach to the problem of motivation seems to lie in his allowing the individual to express his own motives without 'imposing' any pre-conceived ones. There was a certain lack of specificity, however, in his mode of interpreting data, so that it would be

difficult to apply the identical technique with another sample. Snider was also aware of which Ss were high and which were low achievers, and this factor may have biased his interpretations of the Thematic Apperception Test.

McCandlish (1958) followed up Snider's method and subjects and attempted a predictive study. Employing a refined scoring system on the method used by Snider (Arnold's Sequential Analysis for the TAT), he was able to predict high and low achievement correctly for 95% of the Ss on the basis of their attitudes. As a by-product of this study, a personality description of the underachiever emerged. McCandlish found that low achieving Ss had difficulty in relating to people and that this sometimes led to external rebellion or to a cynical attitude; they were conscious of failure, but seldom blamed themselves. The underachiever was, in general, found to be an "immature personality, -deeply immersed in insoluble problems, with little consciousness of his duties and obligations." (p. 65) This study demonstrated a highly reliable method of identifying motivational factors related to achievement, yet the prediction was made 'after the fact.' It would seem that to establish predictive validity, pre measures on motivational variables would have to be made. Such an assessment should include not only the extremes of the achievement continuum, but Ss whose 'potential' achievement would be more centralized in the group.

Shaw and Brown (1957) found that underachievers in college were characterized by an attitude of hostility or hypersensitivity, but that this might not necessarily be shown in overt behavior. These investigators found a significant difference between a group of achievers and underachievers (selected on the basis of equivalent ACE scores and discrepant grade point

averages) on the social scale of the Bell Preference Inventory. On the basis of their research, Shaw and Brown concluded that underachievement was not a surface phenomenon that was easily modifiable, but that it was rather, related to basic personality patterns of the individual. Thus, the notion that underachievement could be attributed solely to poor study habits was gradually shifting.

In a further study, Shaw and Grubb (1958) gave four tests measuring hostility to a group of high and low achievers. Male underachievers were found to manifest significantly more hostility than male achievers, but the picture for females was not clear. Whether there is a real difference between male and female underachievers or whether the difference lies rather in their mode of expressing hostility is a question for future research. A look at the items marked in a negative direction on the tests used in the study indicated that the source of underachievement did not lie within the educational framework, but that it was related to a more deeply rooted personality syndrome. The investigators felt that it was fair to infer that a basically hostile person would not react favorably to demands placed upon him for better performance, and they recommended a counseling approach. The reasons why the hypotheses of this study did not hold up for females might be manifold. However, there was a control factor lacking for the female group (not for the male group) in that the ability scores for achievers and underachievers were significantly different (.01 level).

Various personality patterns in underachievers have been identified in several clinical measures. In a study of MMPI profiles (Drake, 1962), it was observed that low achievers (males) manifested significantly higher

scores on the Ma and Pd scales than did high achievers. McKenzie's findings (1964) are somewhat supportive of these data. This investigator found elevations on Pd and Pt scales and depressions on L and K scales for underachievers. An item analysis in McKenzie's study showed low achievers to be more anxious, more antagonistic towards authority, more dependent on others yet more rejecting of socially acceptable behavior, and less persistent in the search for long range goals than normal achievers. These findings, however, were from a male population and cannot necessarily be generalized.

Using the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, Merrill and Murphy (1959) observed that those who were predicted to be low achievers and who performed as predicted had less need for achievement, intraception, dominance, aggression, and heterosexuality, and higher need for deference, order, exhibition, abasement, affiliation, endurance and change than the norm group. This evidence appears somewhat contradictory to studies that have shown the underachiever to be more aggressive than individuals achieving up to their ability.

Gebhart and Hoyt (1958) had also tried to assess the personality needs of under- and over-achieving males in college, and found that while the latter group had greater need for achievement, order, and intraception, and they were more consistent, the former group had a greater need for nurturance, affiliation, and change. Two different patterns in underachievement were thus suggested by this study: (1) that associated with need for variety wherein studies may appear routine, and (2) that associated with social motives wherein friendships may be placed above scholarship. This was a well designed study, yet the fact that only males were used would limit its application in the present research. One flaw was noted in that the same

ability test was not used as a predictor of grades for all the Ss studied. This would be a critical factor to consider since the reliabilities of the two tests were not the same. Some of the very small discrepancies between predicted achievement and achievement might well have been due to differences in test reliability rather than to 'underachievement.'

Berger (1961) hypothesized that students who were willing to accept their limitations would achieve at a higher level than those who were not. He devised a test to measure this phenomenon, and found when he considered the total group that high scorers made significantly higher grades than low scorers. The hypothesis did not hold up for women, however, when the sexes were considered separately.

Todd, Terrell, and Frank (1962) verified four hypotheses for male under-achievers of superior ability. Identified on the basis of an Academic Aptitude Test score above the 80th percentile and a grade point average less than 2.0, this group were found to show less need for achievement, less decisiveness on a specific occupational goal, more likelihood of looking for a specific occupational orientation in their course work, and a lower expectancy for academic success than those achieving normally. Only two of these observations, namely the second and fourth, were born out for females. The amount and orientation of education were not controlled in this study; members of the three upper classes in college were used, but the number in each class was not specified. This factor would seem important, since vocational goals do tend to change from year to year as new fields are seen in perspective by the student. Grading trends must also be considered when working with Ss at different academic levels. The question might be raised

here as to whether grade point averages from the different classes were comparable.

In a less well-defined study, Flory and Symmes (1964) approached the problem of female underachievers from another angle. Having observed that female college students seeking counseling often manifested difficulty in achieving up to their ability, these investigators attempted to study case history material from a number of these Ss in order to arrive at an explanation of the causes of their lack of achievement. While it was necessary to view a number of the cases individually, a great majority of them fell into two general patterns of behavior. A group of apathetic Ss ($N = 11$) who put forth little or no effort comprised the first group. These Ss' interests were not clearly defined; they frequently changed their majors, were indecisive, and resisted faculty help; they found it difficult to participate in class discussions, and were poor at paper work. These students reported good home situations, though there was evidence to the contrary; peer relations were rather superficial and self-insight was low. The second group ($N = 17$), on the other hand, was made up of Ss whose effort was excessively high, yet whose increased activity did not bring success. Their academic behavior showed marked fluctuations; they were decisive and had clear interest patterns; they were receptive to criticism and participated well in class discussions; they were often perfectionists. A number of these Ss had overt conflicts with parents. Their peer relationships were more meaningful than those of the former group, and they showed considerable insight. Statistical results were not offered by Flory and Symmes, yet their study lent support to the observation that there are various behavioral patterns asso-

ciated with underachievement. Individual characteristics can often be lost sight of by trying to generalize the dynamics of underachievement.

The personality picture emerging for female underachievers has, in general, been less clear than that for men. (Shaw and Grubb, 1958; Berger, 1961) Lesser and Krawitz (1963) helped to clarify this somewhat by their observation that female achievers produced more achievement oriented thematic stories on cards depicting women, whereas underachievers produced more stories relating to achievement in response to the male pictures. It may be, in the light of this research, that underachieving females see achievement more relevant to the male social role than to the female role. Social role is certainly an important aspect of motivation to consider in dealing with high school and college girls.

Research on Group Counseling with Underachievers. Since underachievement seems to be related to social motives, it seems feasible that individuals who can be classified as underachievers might perform better if they were placed in an atmosphere where their social needs could be fulfilled rather than in an environment of a highly competitive group. Such an atmosphere might be provided in a group counseling setting.

There has been a growing trend in recent years to employ various methods of group counseling with students. In view of staff limitations and in consideration of benefits to be derived from group interaction, this approach seems to have a number of merits. To date, however, there is very little evidence of well-controlled research in this area. A few studies are relevant.

Caplan (1957) studied a group of boys who were selected on the basis of conflicts with school authorities and regulations. Three experimental groups, each meeting with a different therapist, and one control group were used. All Ss were given a Q sort for self and ideal self both before and after the ten group sessions. Academic and citizenship marks were also studied. The counseling sessions were intended to give the boys an opportunity to release and to deal with their hostile feelings. A significant change (.01 level) was observed in self-ideal correlations during the counseling process for all three experimental groups, but not for the control group. The counselor was not found to be a factor in the change. There was also an increase in grade point averages (significant at the .05 level) for the experimental groups but not for the control group. Citizenship grades, too, improved (significant at the .01 level) for the former groups, but not for the latter.

This study shows a promising approach in dealing with adolescents, yet it might be criticized on several grounds. For one, a t test was used to check significance of changes in self-ideal congruence, in grade point averages, and in citizenship grades, and from the data given, there is no indication that the assumptions of the t test were fulfilled. Another factor that it would seem important to consider is whether the ideal self has changed during therapy. Has the ideal come down to meet the self or has the self come up to meet the ideal? Either of these situations would result in increased correlations, yet they would have quite a different meaning in relation to the therapeutic process. Controls, too, were rather nebulous in the sense that groups were only "roughly matched" on economic status, intelligence, age, and school record. Numerical values were not presented,

however, to allow for evaluation.

Harris and Trotta (1962) attempted a group therapy experiment with eight pre-adolescent underachievers. Their purpose was to have the children explore their attitudes toward school work and future goals and to note changes in grades and behavior. In presenting their results the investigators said that changes were "sufficiently substantial," but they found that the children had a difficult time being serious and focusing on problems.

From a scientific point of view, this study was quite poor, and seemed rooted in vague platitudes. No control group was used, the criteria for improvement were not mentioned, results were not treated statistically, and from the description of the sessions, it appeared that the rapport was quite poor.

Cubbedge and Hall (1964) experienced a difficulty similar to that of Harris and Trotta (1962) in getting a group of seventh graders to focus on problems. Restlessness and inattentiveness on the part of the youngsters tended to militate against progress of group members, and they did not show significant improvement over members of a control group of underachievers. Difficulty in examining themselves might have been a considerable problem for the case in point here since the group consisted of seven boys and only one girl. There was some lack of control in the study referred to here in the sense that the mothers of the experimental Ss also participated in group sessions; children whose mothers did not volunteer to participate were used as the control group. Hence such factors as lack of parental interest (on the part of the control group) or parental prodding (on the part of the experimental group) might well have been operating here; the interaction of

these factors in the experiment and their effects on the children was not made clear.

A rather interesting study was conducted as part of a research project in connection with Children's Division of the New York City Court (Margolin et al., 1955; Roman, 1957). It had been found that 84 per cent of the children referred to the courts were retarded in reading by two or more years. Many of these children had the ability to learn, but either because of hostility directed to teachers in refusing to read or because of emotional problems, they were unproductive. Tutoring in reading did very little to help these youngsters. An experiment was conducted wherein therapeutic techniques were combined with remedial techniques with a group of these children. The Ss in this group could "talk" or "read" as they saw fit when they met in the group; and even when they read, emphasis was placed on the emotional concomitants of reading. Another group had special tutoring in reading without the therapy and a third group met for purposes of talking over their problems. All three groups met with the same therapist, and all three improved in terms of reading scores as well as in terms of adjustment. The group that had been subjected to the combined approach, however, showed the greatest improvement. In reading, the group which had the dual approach improved 74 per cent, the group who had training in reading improved 39 per cent, and the group who had therapy improved 26 per cent. In school adjustment, as determined by a social worker, the improvement rates were respectively 71 per cent, 45 per cent, and 28 per cent. In the group with the combined approach, the student did not have to achieve to be accepted, and being accepted as a person in his own right, he could afford to drop his defenses against learning

Since learning difficulties are so often associated with delinquency, the investigators have recommended identifying these early in school situations so the individual can be helped before maladjustment in school leads to delinquency patterns. These results are promising and the method of treatment suggested in this study is certainly worth further investigation. There are, however, certain biases that must be considered. While the therapist variable has been controlled, one wonders if the therapist's 'attitude' variable has been controlled. In other words, did the therapist have a preconceived bias as to which group he wanted to make the most improvement in terms of the research? The psychologist who rated the Ss on the Behavior Rating Scale was actually an observer in all three groups; hence the bias factor cannot be ruled out. A further question might be raised as to whether the therapist was equally effective with all three methods.

In the first report of this research project (Margolin et al., 1955), rather a false picture was presented by attempting to show improvement in terms of percentage. The scales of measurement were not ratio scales since they did not have an absolute zero. Yet the authors made such an assumption when they divided scores and presented results as per cent of improvement. When the project was reported a second time, an analysis of variance and t test were used as the statistical methods. While a number of differences were observed on personality measures, changes in reading scores and in social worker ratings were actually not significantly different for the three groups. This statistical treatment might be brought into question here, since there were only seven Ss in each group, and it is not likely that the parametric assumptions were met.

Baymur and Patterson (1960) studied the effects of three different methods of helping underachievers, one of which was group counseling. The other two methods were individual counseling and a one session motivational spur. A control group was also used, and the four groups were matched on aptitude, grade point average, underachievement, socio-economic status, age, and sex. An N of 32 made up the entire sample and these Ss were assessed both before and after the counseling sessions on a Q sort, study habits, and grade point average. Employing an analysis of variance and the t test technique, the investigators found no significant differences between groups on any of the criteria. Considering the two counseled groups together, however, they observed a significant gain in adjustment and grade point average. Most of the gain in adjustment was attributable to individual counseling whereas most of the gain in grade point average was attributable to group counseling. The number of Ss in each of the groups in this study was actually too small to draw any general conclusions. There was also no control set up for the number of counseling sessions offered. Individual counseling took place once a week for 12 weeks whereas those in the group counseling program had only nine sessions. There is likewise serious doubt that the assumption of normality, essential for the parametric tests used, was met. Ss in the counseling groups had not volunteered; many were not even aware that they were underachievers. Perhaps this explains why the group sessions did not develop into a therapeutic unit and these factors would have to be watched in future studies.

Collins (1964) made a comparative study of three different types of group counseling with ninth graders, but found no significant differences

in terms of grade point average or personality characteristics as reported by teachers between any of the experimental groups and a control group. The participants in this research were 161 students from four high schools; all had failed in English or history the previous semester. The Ss were assigned to one of three counseling methods at random: traditional, diagnostic, or non-directive, or to a control group. Groups numbered 11 to 15 members who were matched for age, sex, IQ, and grade point average.

This seemed to be a well designed study, yet reasons for lack of positive results might be manifold. The investigator has recommended smaller sized groups, voluntary participation, and a continuation of the meetings over two semesters as a means of improving his procedure. There is also still a question which research has not clarified as to whether boys and girls at this age level are really willing to examine themselves, particularly in a group situation. Again, it would be of interest to note which individuals did improve. Were there specific personality characteristics of these Ss? The effect of the large number might have been to cancel out the changes that did take place in specific instances or in specific personality patterns.

Richardson (1964) noted that personality factors did differentiate between those who showed improvement and those who showed a decrement in grades after counseling, though this observation was made on the basis of individual treatment. Studying 38 counseled and 38 non-counseled college students, he found no significant changes in their grades when the groups were compared term by term. When members of the counseled group whose grades improved (13), however, were compared with those whose grades dropped (20), different per-

sonality patterns emerged for each of the two groups. The former Ss had a great need for acceptance and belongingness; they were constricted, dependent, and seldom resourceful. The latter Ss had emotional, family, and peer difficulties, and in general, they tended to be pleasure seekers. These personality factors were not measured by tests, however, but were based on clinical observations. Personality factors of Ss who can benefit from group counseling should be identified through more objective personality measures in order to throw light on the effects of counseling in different settings.

Lawrence and Kiell (1961) found group counseling highly effective with college students troubled with anxiety, tension, and lack of self confidence. They felt that it was an answer to meet the needs of the larger number of college students seeking assistance. This was actually a descriptive study and it did not employ statistical techniques. However, some of the ideas hypothesized are worthy of testing through more exact measures.

Boenheim (1957) has emphasized the importance of proper selection of adolescents for group psychotherapy. He has also pointed out the greater limits in dealing with the analysis of inner impulses with this group than with adults, and the necessity of sometimes encouraging the group by asking questions. These are important factors to consider since, in all likelihood, the method as well as the interaction and material discussed relate to the particular areas in which an individual improves. If growth in specific areas is desired, it seems that focus should be placed here and that the group should be so constituted that it is amenable to a 'focused' approach.

Goldburgh and Penney (1962), too, have seen the necessity of "limitation" therapy when treating adolescents. They have proposed dealing with the im-

mediate problem of underachievement and focusing on the causes of this 'symptom' only rather than on reorganization of the whole personality. They refer to this limited goal therapy as "sector" counseling and they deliberately try to avoid transference in such a relationship. Since so much research shows widespread hostility toward authority among underachievers, these investigators suggest that the aim of counseling with such individuals be to bring them to a level of understanding how they might unconsciously be waging an aggressive attack on their parents or other authority figures by neglecting to study and thereby getting poor grades. Having acquired such insight, the counselees will then be able to shift the direction of their emotional energy into more effective studying. Three methods of handling irrelevant material were suggested by Goldburgh and Penney: (1) Interpretation of such as a defense against discussing the presenting problem; (2) Redirection of the material by an analogy to the conflict area within the sector; and (3) Communication of the fact to S that the material is simply not related to the particular sector in focus.

While sector therapy has certain merits for the short term cases, it would seem to carry the danger of warding off material that might be highly relevant to the Ss' underachievement. Since the dynamics of underachievement are still ambiguous to a degree, it would be extremely difficult if not impossible to delimit the conflict areas of the Ss involved. Only controlled research can show the value of such a method as compared to others.

A well designed and controlled study was undertaken by Ofman (1964) in order to evaluate the effects of a "Study Habits Seminar" (group counseling procedure). Five groups of 60 Ss: an "experimental" group who volun-

teered and participated in group counseling, a "control" group who volunteered but were told the seminar was closed, a "wait" group who volunteered but were obliged to wait for two semesters, a "dropout" group who volunteered but dropped out of the group before the fourth session, and a "baseline" group chosen at random from the school population were equated for ACE scores. Grade point averages for each of the eight semesters in college were tabulated for members of each group. While four of the groups had comparable grade point averages at the beginning of the experimental period, the average of the "baseline" group was somewhat higher than the others. The experimental group improved significantly, but this did not begin to take place notably until the third semester in college. By the fourth semester, their grades were comparable to those of the baseline group. The wait group too, improved but not until after participation in counseling. On the basis of this study, it was concluded that group counseling was an effective means of helping students improve their grades, but that it took some time for the newly acquired insights to be used advantageously, hence results were not seen immediately.

This study appeared to be well-controlled, yet no personality measures were used, and one wonders if different personality factors might not have been present in each of the various groups to account in part for the changes in grade point average.

Another attempt to use group therapy with boys who were prone to act out in school was made the subject of investigation by Doering (1963). Twenty-five students were placed into one of five groups and they met weekly for 16 sessions. Twenty-five controls were also placed into one of five groups

and these met twice, once at the beginning and once at the end of the period. A number of quantitative measures were given to both groups both before and after the sessions, and teachers were also asked to rate behavior. A significant gain in achievement was not effected through the group therapy program, although the overall trend was for the experimental group to improve their grades and for the control group to regress. The group therapy did not produce changes in self-perception although teachers did report less acting out on the part of the students in therapy. It seems that more controlled research along this line is needed not only with those who manifest acting out behavior, but with those whose overt symptom is underachievement and whose personality disturbances may be more subtle.

Garwood (1963) tried such an approach with underachieving adolescents. He divided 32 volunteers into two experimental and two control groups. All subjects were assessed before the counseling sessions on the basis of grade point averages, teachers' ratings, Bell's Index of Adjustment and Values, California Test of Personality, and the McKinney Sentence Completion Blank. The experimental groups met twice a week for eight weeks, after which the assessment measures were again given to all the Ss. Then the control group met for group counseling and the battery was again given to both groups. As a result of the counseling sessions, the experimental groups showed a significant gain over the control groups in acceptance of others after the first experimental period, but the control groups showed a significant gain by the end of the second period. There were marked individual differences noted, however. While some of the students improved in certain areas, others tended to regress. An individual's personality in relation to the particular

group in which he participated was an important factor in determining the direction of change.

Broedel, Ohlsen, Proff, and Southland (1960) had previously made a similar study of ninth grade students who ranked in the upper ten per cent of their class on the California Test of Mental Maturity, yet scored at the ninth decile or below in terms of grade point average. These Ss were designated as underachievers, and were assigned to one of two experimental and two control groups each with six to eight boys and girls. After meeting with the experimental Ss individually to explain the purpose of the counseling sessions, the therapist met with them twice a week for eight weeks in their respective groups for counseling sessions. The sessions, which took place during the students' regular study period, were recorded and were observed over closed circuit TV by four judges (raters). At the end of the eight week experimental period, the control groups then met for group counseling sessions. Improvement was judged on the basis of three criteria: academic performance as measured by grade point average and the California Achievement Test Battery; acceptance of self and others as measured in a thematic picture test; and interpersonal behavior as measured by a Behavior Inventory rated by the students themselves, their parents, the counselor, and observers. The results of this study indicated that the experimental groups made a significantly greater mean gain in acceptance of self and others than the control groups after the eight weeks of counseling sessions. The experimental Ss grew worse in their grade point averages and on the California Achievement Test, however, while the control groups showed an increase on these measures. While the counseled group also showed improvement on the Behavior Rating Scale, their

self ratings (for more than half of the members) were more negative after their participation in the group sessions. The investigators felt that this lowered self rating might have been due to a more accurate perception of themselves following therapy or to a reduced anxiety which would enable them to admit their faults more readily. They concluded on the basis of their study that group counseling in itself was not a sufficient tool for effecting better performance in school subjects unless faculty members could be made more aware of the needs of underachievers.

This appeared to be a well-controlled study, but several facets of the experiment bring questions to the mind of the reviewer. The first is the effect that being observed over closed circuit TV had on the Ss. One wonders if the added anxiety produced by not being able to see their observers might have created a tension which failed to allow their needs to be satisfied in the group. Another point that comes to mind is the fact that over half of the Ss rated themselves more negatively after the sessions than before. It would seem that the students' own perception of their behavior would actually be a more important criterion for measuring growth than adults' perception of their behavior, for it is the former evaluation that would actually have a more profound influence on school achievement and on the Ss' approach to current situations. The fact that there is still so much disagreement among judges as to what constitutes improvement in psychotherapy (Carr and Whittenbaugh, 1965) would further tend to minimize the value of observer ratings.

The criterion for defining underachievement in the study just mentioned might also be brought into question. Those ranking at the ninth decile or

below would not all be classed as underachievers according to the more widely accepted terminology. The ninth decile corresponds to the 90th percentile and to say that one whose ability is in the upper 10 per cent of the class and whose achievement is in the lower 90 per cent of the class is an underachiever is to assume perfect reliability and validity for both tests with no margin for error. This situation simply does not exist except in theory. While some Ss falling within this definition would show great underachievement, others would show very little or none. Another criticism that might be leveled at this study is the "bias" of the judges. Parents had been informed of the project and would "expect" improved results. Also the observers who were raters had an interest in confirming the hypotheses of the experiment. There was also some question of scorer reliability on the Picture Story Test. The number of raters was not given nor was interrater reliability mentioned.

One vital point brought out in this study was the importance of the selective factor. One of the control groups failed to make progress during the course of the second semester because of two hostile boys who created obstacles impeding the therapeutic process.

Winborn and Schmidt (1962) investigated the effects of group counseling on superior underachieving college freshmen (male and female). Ss were identified on the basis of ACE scores above the 80th percentile and a grade point average below 1.50 (based on a 3.0 formula) for the first semester. Two counselors worked with three groups each for six one hour counseling sessions. From 135 Ss who satisfied the criterion, 68 of them were drawn at random as the experimental group. All Ss were given the California Psycholog-

ical Inventory (CPI) both before and after the sessions, and grade point averages were also compared for the two groups. At the end of the sessions, contrary to expectations, the mean grade point average of the control group was significantly higher (.05 level) than that of the experimental group. The counselor was not found to be a factor in the change. It was concluded that group counseling led to a negative effect on achievement. Neither were any significant differences between groups observed on the CPI.

One possible explanation for the negative effect of the group counseling is the fact that six sessions would hardly be enough time to allow the individuals to get to know one another let alone work through their negative affect. It would seem necessary to extend the time somewhat. The fact that Ss were selected and were not volunteers would also work against realizing positive results in so short a time.

Spielberger, Weitz, and Denny (1962, 1964), having observed that "anxious" college students tended to earn lower grade point averages and to drop out of college more frequently than non-anxious students, attempted a group counseling procedure as a preventative measure. For two successive years, male college freshmen who scored high on Taylor's MAS and Welsh's A scale and who were at or above the fourth stanine on the ACE (or the third stanine on the CEEB) were invited to participate in a voluntary "academic orientation program" aimed at helping the individuals to adjust to college life and to talk over the problems related to college life. Volunteers were assigned to experimental or control groups, the former receiving group counseling once a week for a maximum of 13 sessions. Groups were matched on scholastic aptitude. It was the purpose of this study to see if Ss who participated in

group counseling sessions showed greater improvement in their grade point averages and dropped out of college less frequently than non-counseled Ss. The counselor's role was rather flexible; in fact, the group took interest tests during one of the sessions and discussed them at another. All the sessions were taped and non-verbal behavior was recorded by an assistant. It was noted that while the experimental groups talked about academic difficulties, they tended to avoid the area of personal problems. During the first year this project was carried on, both experimental and control groups improved in grade point average from midterm to final grades (the period during which counseling took place), with the counseled group showing significantly more improvement than the non-counseled group (.05 level). During the second year of the study, however, the counseling started earlier in the semester and while the experimental group had higher grade point averages than the control group at the midterm, there were no pre measures to enable one to determine whether this was a function of the counseling or not. From midterm until the end of the semester, the control group actually showed more improvement than the experimental group. With the group that met the first year the study was undertaken, there was also a significant difference in improvement between high and low attenders.

In following up the groups, it was seen that many decrements occurred in grades for the second semester due to pledging in fraternities; this drop took place regardless of whether the Ss had been counseled or not. Hence, the counseling was not felt to have a carry-over effect.

Several factors might have militated against the effectiveness of this experiment. For one thing, it would seem that the administration and dis-

cussion of interest tests during the counseling sessions would tend to keep the participants from really getting involved at a personal level, and hence to limit progress. The term used for the sessions, "academic orientation program," would seem to have the same effect. Also, the fact that the two groups were begun at different times in the semester and that an initial grade point average was not available on the groups makes comparison difficult. It might also be pointed out that a different criterion of anxiety on Welsh's scale was used for the two samples, and the groups in the second population were considerably larger than those in the first. These factors would tend to lessen the comparability of the groups.

On the basis of the ambiguous results observed in this study, it was concluded that a voluntary group counseling approach was not the most effective means to prevent underachievement since the Ss who became underachievers did not volunteer for the group nor was anxiety necessarily a debilitating factor for academic success. This assumption was not born out. It would seem that anxiety per se is not a good predictor of potential underachievement, since anxiety can facilitate as well as inhibit success depending on the individual. Past underachievement would seem to be a more stable criterion.

The fact that participation in groups was "voluntary" brought into focus another difficulty often found in research in psychotherapy--that of maintaining a "captive" group who would "persevere" through the end of the experiment. In Spielberger et al.'s study, a number of the Ss did not attend sessions regularly.

Research on the Personal Orientation Inventory. Perhaps one of the greatest obstacles to valid research in the area of group counseling is the lack of adequate criteria for improvement. Eysenck (1952) pointed out, for example, how such phrases as "greatly improved" or "slightly improved" can mean such different things to different individuals. In 1960, a questionnaire was given to registrants of the American Group Psychotherapy Association (Hartley and Rosenbaum, 1963) on which members were asked to rank what they considered to be the three most important criteria for improvement in group therapy. The three that ranked highest among the three professions represented were: (1) self acceptance, self confidence, self reliance, (2) flexibility, the ability to cope with a variety of experiences, and (3) improved interpersonal functioning both in and out of the group.

A relatively new measure which seems to tap these areas is Shostrom's Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) (1963). Based on Maslow's notion of the self-actualized person (1954, 1962) as well as on theoretical formulations of gestalt, existential, and humanistic psychology, this instrument is made up of 150 comparative value judgments that were chosen empirically by a group of therapists. Its aim is to measure self-actualization or positive mental health tendencies rather than pathological indications as is often the case with other clinical instruments. Writings of Maslow (1954) as well as those of Rogers (1951) and Brammer and Shostrom (1964) suggest that the self-actualized person might be seen as the "end-product of the process of psychotherapy." (Shostrom, 1963)

Items on the POI are stated both positively and negatively; thus it is not taken for granted that the subject know the opposite of a given state-

ment or question. A support scale, based on Reisman's theory (1950), assesses a person's reactivity as to whether it is basically "other" oriented or "self" oriented, and a time competence scale, based on the ideas of May (1958) and Perl (1951), measures the degree to which an individual effectively uses his time. Other subscales, still undergoing research, are those for self actualizing value, existentiality, feeling reactivity, spontaneity, self regard, self acceptance, nature of man, synergy, acceptance of aggression, and capacity for intimate contact.

Normative data gathered so far are based on responses of 561 college freshmen in Southern California. Test-retest reliability was established on a group of 158 "normal" adults for the support and time ratios. Coefficients were .93 and .91 respectively. Relatively "self-actualized" and relatively "non-self-actualized" persons were nominated by a group of clinical psychologists, and test validity was established on the basis of these two groups. The inventory significantly discriminated between the two groups on 11 of the 12 scales measured. Self actualized persons were able to free themselves from social pressures, could live more fully in the present while at the same time tying in past and future events to the present, and were sensitive to the feelings of others but were not dependent on them.

Shostrom (1964) made a further validity study of the POI and tried to show the sensitivity of the instrument to changes in personality functioning as a result of therapy. He studied two groups of patients, one at the beginning phase of therapy ($N = 37$) and one group whose mean time in therapy was 27 months. ($N = 39$) Groups were compared in terms of age, sex, and level of education, and all Ss were given the POI and the MMPI. All 12 of

the POI scales differentiated significantly between the two groups at the .01 level. On the MMPI, four of the subscales differentiated between the groups at the .01 level. Pearson r 's were calculated to relate MMPI scales to measures of self-actualization for both beginning and advanced groups in therapy, and a number of significant correlations were observed. The Si scale on the MMPI correlated more than any other scale with the POI. Of the 24 correlations between the Si scale and POI scales, 12 were significant at the .01 level. All POI variables were negatively related to Si. There were also many significant r 's with the D scale which is one of the most effective MMPI scales in differentiating beginning from advanced groups in therapy. Several significant correlations between the K scale and sub scales of the POI suggested that K might be useful in validating the POI. In general, it is suggested by this study that the process of therapy effects not only decrease in pathology but an increase in positive aspects of mental health. Therapy also tends to make an individual more inner directed than other directed.

One thing that this study failed to consider is an IQ difference between groups which might have affected results. It was quite possible that this was a factor since the average educational level of the advanced group was two years higher than that of the beginning group. Even this factor in itself might account for some of the difference.

Knapp (1965) tried to establish another measure of concurrent validity for the POI by using Eysenck's Personality Inventory as a criterion. One hundred thirty-six undergraduate college students were selected on the basis of the neuroticism dimension on Eysenck's inventory. All 12 scales of the

POI differentiated at the .05 level or better between "high" and "low" neurotic groups, and self-actualization was seen to be related to a lack of neurotic symptoms. Large differences were found on scales measuring time competence, self regard, and synergy in understanding human nature. The POI was also positively related to the extroversion scale of Eysenck's inventory on a number of the scales, suggesting that the self-actualized person is somewhat of an extrovert.

While the Personal Orientation Inventory is still in the experimental stages, results look promising. It would seem that one aspect of the inventory that would have to be tested is whether it is sensitive to changes that take place in an individual as a result of therapy. While other studies have investigated different individuals at various stages of therapy, they have not assessed the same individuals before and after therapy sessions. This study has attempted to do that.

Research on the Q Sort. A device that has been somewhat successful in measuring therapeutic change in those who have voluntarily sought counseling is the Q Sort Technique. This ipsative procedure which permits the expression of an integrated personality formulation entails having the individual sort a group of adjectives or phrases according to the degree in which they are characteristic of himself. He then sorts the same group of words or phrases according to the degree in which they are characteristic of the kind of a person he would most like to be. (This technique tends to eliminate response set.) Correlations are then found between self and ideal sorts. There is evidence that the correlations tend to increase as a result of

counseling. Stephenson (1953) was the first to popularize this technique, and its use as a means of measuring growth through counseling has been steadily increasing.

Butler and Haigh (1954) have done a considerable amount of research on assessing changes in self-ideal correlations resulting from counseling. Using an experimental group (who received counseling) and a control group roughly equivalent to the former in terms of age, sex, and socio-economic status, they found that the counseled group improved significantly more than the non-counseled group at the end of the sessions. (.01 level) The control group had shown more congruence between self and ideal prior to the experimental period, however, so there is considerable question as to the comparability of the groups. The investigators just mentioned also tested out the possibility that practice in taking a Q sort or that the very presentation of oneself for therapy would effect changes. Using a group as its own control and testing them when they first presented themselves, after a waiting period, and again after counseling, they found a positive increase in correlation only after counseling.

Williams (1962), also employing the Butler-Haigh Q Sort, took care to use groups comparable in self-ideal congruence prior to counseling; he found, after brief educational-vocational counseling, that participants had made significant gains over those who had not participated.

The particular Q sort used in the present study was one devised by Block (1961) for use with non-professional sorters. Composed of 70 items to be arranged in seven categories, this list is comprehensive and easily understandable.

Butler and Haigh in the study mentioned above had noted that it was possible for certain individuals to sort "defensively," so that very high correlations were not necessarily a sign of good adjustment. This hypothesis was put to test by Block and Hobart (1955) using Block's Adjective Q Sort. Hypothesizing that degree of self-satisfaction was curvilinearly related to adjustment, these investigators gave an MMPI and the Q Sort to 56 Ss who took both tests anonymously. The product moment correlations of self with ideal ranged from $-.30$ to $+.84$ with a median of $.64$. These correlations were transformed to z scores and upon correlating them with MMPI scales, it was found that there was a significant degree of negative correlation with most of the scales. Correlation with K, however was positive as was that with Block's Ego Control Scale (E-C) ($r = .44$) and a denial scale (De) ($r = .41$). Correlations with an admission scale (Ad) was $-.54$. These last three mentioned correlations were significant at the $.01$ level. In order to test out the hypothesis of curvilinearity, the 10 Ss with the highest self-ideal correlations were compared with those whose self-satisfaction indices clustered about the median. The De scores of the former group were significantly higher than those of the latter, indicative of the fact that they tended to deny their problems. It was thus concluded that extreme self satisfaction represents an unhealthy tendency. A content analysis was made to identify trends in the high self-satisfaction group (r 's of $.77$ to $.84$), the group whose scores ranged about the median (r 's of $.52$ to $.66$), and the low self-satisfaction group (r 's of $-.30$ to $.30$). It was found that the high group emphasized social appropriateness and that they required acceptance and popularity; the low group were confused, overly-introspective, and had

unrealistic aspirations; the middle group tended to be reasonable and accepting of themselves and were comfortable in their relations with others. Block related these three levels of self-satisfaction to three types of ego control, (his ego control scale) namely, overcontrol, undercontrol, and appropriate control.

While the Q Sort methodology tends to reduce response set, Edwards (1955) has shown a high correlation between Q sorts and social desirability (for males, $r = .84$; for females, $r = .87$). This observation might have some relevance to the group of overcontrollers studied by Block and Hobart (1955). These Ss, it will be recalled, were concerned with social appropriateness, acceptance, and popularity. It seems possible that social desirability and overcontrol as defined in these two studies have much in common.

Research on Edwards Personal Preference Schedule. The other personality measure used in the present study was one devised by Edwards (1959) in an attempt to minimize the factor of social desirability operative in so many "yes-no" type questionnaires. The Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS) was designed primarily for research and counseling purposes. Its aim was "to provide quick and convenient measures of a number of relatively independent normal personality variables." (Edwards, 1959, p. 5) The relative strength of the manifest needs for achievement, deference, order, exhibition, autonomy, affiliation, intraception, succorance, dominance, abasement, nurturance, change, endurance, heterosexuality, and aggression are purportedly measured by this instrument.

Edwards set up this questionnaire using a forced choice method of an-

swering items equated for social desirability. One hundred forty items based on Murray's need system had previously been measured for social desirability. Edwards (1953) had used 152 Ss to judge the social desirability of each item in the inventory. Nine intervals were used and the scale values for the items were determined by the method of successive intervals. Later, he employed the inventory with another group of Ss, asking them to describe themselves by responding "yes" or "no" to items as they characterized themselves, and he found that endorsement of the items correlated .87 with social desirability. Forthwith, he tried to eliminate this factor by using a forced choice method of responding and equating items for social desirability.

Edwards went further and obtained two outside measures of social desirability: One was the K scale on the MMPI; the other was the SD scale set up by having 10 Ss answer 150 selected MMPI items in the most socially desirable way. The 79 items on which there was perfect agreement made up the SD scale. There were, in general, low correlations between the EPPS variables and these two scales for social desirability. Highest relationships with the SD scale were observed on the Edwards' scales for endurance ($r = -.32$); the aggression variable showed the highest relationship with the K scale ($r = -.33$).

While Edwards had attempted to minimize the influence of social desirability on his test by pairing items equated for this variable, Corah et al. (1958) noted that he did not check the items for judged social desirability after they had been paired. These investigators used 30 paired items to investigate the influence of this variable in Edwards' test and their subjects were asked to answer in a socially desirable way. In this study, a high social desirability factor was observed with 17 of the 30 paired items show-

ing differences significant at the .01 level. Achievement was considered more socially desirable in seven of the ten paired items used, order in four of the pairs, and succorance and abasement each in three of the pairs. The investigators concluded that social desirability was operating in the Edwards' test as in other paper and pencil tests and that single items sometimes changed in social desirability when paired with another item; hence items responded to singly couldn't be equated on this variable when they were paired. It was not clear, however, whether real differences existed, or whether the results of this study indicated, rather, different value judgments on what was "socially desirable" for different populations.

Norms on the EPPS were gathered on 749 college women and 760 college men of a wide age range from various universities and colleges. Norms were reported separately for the two sex groups since a number of significant differences were found between them. Men had higher mean scores for achievement, autonomy, dominance, heterosexuality, and aggression, while women were higher on affiliation, intraception, succorance, abasement, nurturance, and change scales. Other norms were established on a general adult population of 4031 males and 4932 females. Differences between sex groups were in the same direction for the general adult population as for the college group, though there were still some significant differences between these two norm groups.

Klett (1957) established additional norms on 1633 high school students in two schools and found a number of differences between this group and the college population. High school girls (who were also the concern of the present study) manifested significantly higher need for exhibition, affilia-

tion, abasement, nurturance, change, and aggression than the college women. The college female group, on the other hand, were significantly higher in need for achievement, deference, intraception, dominance, and endurance. Sex differences were also found for this group, the boys being higher on achievement, exhibition, autonomy, dominance, endurance, heterosexuality, and aggression scales and the girls on scales measuring affiliation, intraception, succorance, abasement, nurturance, change, and consistency. No significant relationships of the EPPS variables with IQ, age, grades, or socioeconomic group when taken separately were observed. Some interaction of variables was evident, however.

While the author recommended that separate norms be applied for high school and college students, the stability of his own findings does not seem sufficient to warrant their use. He found significant differences between the two schools he used as samples, and it would seem that the results might well be due to a locality factor.

Internal consistency for the EPPS was assessed by calculating split half reliability for row and column scores on the 15 variables. For the 1509 Ss in the college sample, the reliability ranged from .60 for the deference scale to .87 for the heterosexuality scale.

Test-retest reliability based on protocols of 89 Ss tested at intervals a week apart ranged from .74 for achievement and exhibition scales to .88 for the abasement scale. Mann's test-retest reliability (1958) findings over a three week period were somewhat lower, extending from .55 for affiliation to .87 for the deference scale. Intercorrelations among the scales were generally quite low for the college group indicating that the variables were

relatively independent measures.

Validity measures have been difficult to establish due to lack of adequate criteria. An attempt to investigate validity was made by having Ss make a Q sort of the items of the EPPS. While some Ss showed a high correlation, however, others were strongly influenced by social desirability on the Q sort.

The EPPS was also validated against the Guilford-Martin Personnel Inventory and Taylor's MAS. A number of low, but significant (at the .05 level) correlations were found, yet it is possible that some of the correlations were reflective of the social desirability factor.

Mann (1958) observed that 10 of the 15 EPPS variables were related to self ratings based on these same variables, and Dunnette et al. (1958) found a number of significant relationships between the EPPS and the California Psychological Inventory.

Some attempts have been made to validate the separate scales of the EPPS against outside criteria. Melikian (1958) found almost no relationship between need for achievement as measured by Edwards' test and by the McClelland method. She made the observation that the achievement motive was rather complex and that the Edwards' variable appeared to be related to a conscious hope of success rather than a fear of failure. Heilbrun (1962) investigating the achievement need on the EPPS, found it to have only an insignificant relationship with grade point average, and Goodstein and Heilbrun (1962) found it to be somewhat correlated with grade point average for males ($r = .24$) but not for females ($r = .07$). These same investigators observed that for females of low ability, abasement and nurturance scales correlated negative-

ly with grade point average and for females of high ability, the intraception scale was positively correlated with grade point average.

Bernadin and Jessor (1957) made a study of the construct validity of the EPPS in relation to dependency. They defined dependency as (a) reliance on others for approval, (b) reliance on others for help or assistance, and (c) conformity to the opinions and demands of others, and they set up an experimental condition to test each of these modes of behavior in relation to EPPS variables. Dependent Ss were identified on the basis of EPPS deference scores at or above the 70th percentile and autonomy scores at or below the 50th percentile (with at least 30 percentile points between the two). Independent Ss were identified on the basis of autonomy scores at or above the 70th percentile and deference scores at or below the 50th percentile (with a minimum of 30 percentile points between the two). It was confirmed in this study that dependent Ss who received negative verbal reinforcement performed less well on a task than independent Ss subjected to the same treatment or dependent Ss who didn't receive the negative reinforcement. The dependent Ss also asked for more help and reassurance than independent Ss when both groups were faced with a difficult problem solving task. Contrary to expectations, however, dependent Ss were not more bound to group conformity in a perceptual judgment task than independent Ss. The results of this study gave support to the construct validity of one aspect of the EPPS.

Gisvold (1958) attempted a further investigation of the hypothesis Bernadin and Jessor had failed to confirm, and using a modified method of Ash's measure of conformity, he found a correlation of $-.54$ between this variable and Edwards' autonomy scale. He found only an insignificant cor-

relation of .17, however, with the deference scale.

Zuckerman (1958) attempted to validate the EPPS against personality traits of dependency and rebelliousness. A group of student nurses were asked to nominate from among their members the most conforming, the most submissive, the most dependent, and the most rebellious individual. Ss had previously been given the EPPS and when the Edwards' scales were compared for rebellious and dependent Ss (the latter group being a combination of the nominees for the most conforming, the most submissive, and the most dependent S), a number of significant relationships were observed. The dependent Ss were higher on deference, succorance, and abasement scales, and they were lower on autonomy, dominance, and aggression. Scales measuring abasement and autonomy were the most effective in differentiating between groups.

The EPPS has then, in general, manifested reasonable validity and reliability as a research instrument for use with a normal population. And the particular scales validated (in the studies mentioned here) seem to be related to the dynamics of achievement as mentioned earlier.

Research on the Scholastic Testing Service High School Placement Test. The Scholastic Testing Service High School Placement Test (STS HSPT), upon which ability measures described in this study were based, was first developed in 1958. The Test is newly devised each year, and it is a closed test in the sense that it is not sold on the market, but is distributed by and returned to the company who scores the tests and sends out normative data. Eight scores including measures of verbal ability, IQ, reading achievement,

arithmetic achievement, language achievement, and a battery composite score are reported for all Ss who take the test.

The writing of items for each test begins two years before the test is to be used. Then, the year preceding the wholesale use of the test, it is administered to a representative sample of eighth graders in order that item difficulty can be determined, test results can be analyzed, and the test can be put in its final form.

Norms for the test are developed each year by testing approximately 2500 students. Half of these Ss are given the new form of the battery; the other half are given the preceding year's edition on which national norms have been previously established. An attempt is made to stratify this sample of students on the basis of sex, size of school, geographic location, and rural/urban classification. Norms for the new form of the test are equated with preceding norms by means of the equi-percentile method. Then, after the battery has been administered each year, a sample of 25,000 cases is selected and norms on this sample are checked against those of the smaller sample derived earlier.

The 1962 edition of the STS HSPT (which was the edition used in the present study) reported a mean IQ of 102.18 and a standard deviation of 13.54 for the normative sample. Reliability was established by means of the split-half method and also by the Kuder-Richardson formula. For the total ability score, an odd-even reliability coefficient of .94 and a KR coefficient of .92 gave evidence of high reliability. The standard error of measurement for IQ scores was 3.59; for raw scores indicating total ability, it was 4.48.

A number of measures of concurrent validity have been established on the 1962 edition of the test. Correlations of the total ability score with subtests of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills were in the high .70's and .80's. Similar relationships were observed when total ability was correlated with the Iowa Tests of Educational Development. For two separate groups, IQ scores on the STS HSPT correlated with IQ scores on the California Test of Mental Maturity with r 's of .78 and .72. Otis IQ scores correlated .77, .59, and .74 with STS IQ scores and Pintner IQ scores had correlations of .70 and .81 with this measure of ability.

Predictive validity for the 1962 edition of the STS has been established by correlating scores made on the test with grades earned at the end of the freshman year. A one year follow up study in a Chicago suburban school showed correlations with total ability ranging from .41 (for history) to .70 (for French). In four other studies, total ability scores were found to correlate from .74 to .79 with grade point averages earned at the end of the first semester in high school.

In general, then, the validity and reliability of the STS HSPT is comparable to other paper and pencil measures of intelligence. The mean IQ scores on this measure tend to be slightly lower than those earned on the California Test of Mental Maturity or on the Otis Mental Ability Test.

Summary of Literature. In viewing the results of the research reported here, one observes that underachievement is often associated with personality factors. Such investigators as Snider (1953), McCandlish (1958), Shaw and Grubb (1958), Drake (1962), Gebhart and Hoyt (1958), Merrill and Murphy

(1959), and Flory and Symmes (1964) used various clinical instruments to identify the dynamics of underachievers, and while some contradictory evidence was observed, there frequently emerged the picture of the underachiever as one who is impulsive, who seeks self gratification, who is anxious, who lacks perseverance, who has difficulty in interpersonal relationships, who is conscious of failure yet projects the blame onto others, who is hostile and sometimes aggressive, who is hypersensitive, and who has greater need for affiliation, nurturance, and change than Ss achieving up to their ability. For females, the sex social role concept has, to some extent, made the dynamics of their behavior less clear than that for males.

Research has also provided some hope that a group counseling approach might be effective in helping underachievers to free themselves for deeper learning experiences which would effect a greater measurable achievement. Margolin (1955), Caplan (1957), Collins (1964), Doering (1963), Garwood (1963), Broedel et al. (1960), and Spielberger et al. (1962, 1964) have made significant contributions in this area of investigation. Margolin (1955) focused on delinquents, Caplan (1957) and Doering (1963) on Ss who had conflicts with school authorities, and Spielberger et al. (1962, 1964) on "anxious" Ss. The other three studies referred to here focused on Ss who were failing or underachieving in school. The studies mentioned here were all actually concerned with this latter problem in its relationship to personality factors, and all used measures to assess subjects in terms of achievement as well as adjustment. Margolin's (1955) and Collins' (1964) designs were set up to test the effect of the same therapist using different treatment techniques while the other investigators referred to here designed

their research with reference to the factor of counseling vs. non-counseling, using one or several therapists. Only two of these studies used volunteer groups (Spielberger et al., 1962, 1964; Garwood, 1963), and difficulties inherent in both volunteer and non-volunteer groups were brought into focus in the various experiments.

Some of the investigators reviewed here have failed to set up controls for significant variables. Others have established adequate controls, yet have assumed a normal distribution, a linear relationship, and homoscedasticity when working with very small groups or when setting off a segment of a particular distribution for investigation. Their data do not seem to meet these requirements essential for parametric tests. The present study has graphed the data in order to determine the feasibility of using parametric vs. non-parametric measures. By employing non-parametric techniques, which are somewhat less powerful than the parametric tests, more generality can actually be drawn from the conclusions reached (Seigel, 1956, p. 62), and in this way, the assumptions for a t test or an F test can be avoided.

Some of the studies reviewed here have given evidence of improved achievement as a result of counseling; others have shown negative results. Some have reported an increase in measures of adjustment; others have not. The reasons why some individuals have not benefited from group counseling have not been clear, and the present study has attempted to clarify this somewhat for a female group by assessing their particular motivational patterns and by studying progress (or lack of it) resulting from group counseling in the light of specific motivational patterns.

Motivational patterns have been assessed by the EPPS, an instrument

measuring the relative strength of 15 of Murray's "manifest needs." The social desirability variable has been minimized on this inventory, and test-retest reliability has ranged from .55 to .88 for the various scales. Measures of both construct and concurrent validity have shown considerable promise for the EPPS as a research instrument.

Criteria for improvement have long been an obstacle in controlled psychotherapy research. The present study focused on measures of self evaluation along with school grades since it was felt that one's self perception would be more likely to influence school performance than would an outsider's rating of behavior. The instruments chosen (POI and Block's Q Sort) have shown fair promise as research tools.

The validating literature on these tests has been reviewed here, and while validity studies are still scanty, the instruments have shown considerable sensitivity to therapeutic changes. There are, of course, certain limitations in the tests as there are in other paper and pencil questionnaires. Such variables as social desirability and lack of self knowledge, for example, cannot be tapped. Yet, the validity of the tests seems sufficiently high to warrant their use in research.

Chapter III

Procedure

A pilot study conducted over a four month period prior to the present research gave evidence of some significant data, but it was necessary to test out the findings more broadly. In this study, 14 underachieving college men who were enrolled in a course in reading skills served as the subjects. The majority of these Ss were on probation, having failed to obtain an adequate grade point average the previous semester, and they were required to take the course. A few had volunteered for the course, however, feeling deficiencies in reading skills. These students were all given specialized training in reading skills with emphasis on speed as well as on comprehension and vocabulary building. Seven of these Ss, who made up the experimental group, participated in 19 group counseling sessions held twice weekly in addition to the reading class. Upon completion of this study, it was found that: (1) Both groups showed improvement in rate of reading, yet comprehension scores were not uniformly improved for either group; differences between groups were not significant. (2) Both groups showed an increase in grade point average with the experimental group improving significantly more than the control group. (3) Several significant differences were observed on the POI scales. The amount of change between the two groups in

self-actualizing values, the ability to be synergic in understanding human nature, and the ability to transcendent dichotomies was significantly different, and results favored the experimental group. There was also a tendency for the experimental group to manifest more facility in living in the here and now. A summary of these results may be seen in Table 1.

While these findings gave promise, several shortcomings of the pilot study could be noted. The N was small and many irregularities in the control group made it impossible to accept the results at face value statistically. Subjects had not volunteered for the reading class, and as a result, had some negative motivation which militated against regular attendance; it was thus not possible to get all pre and post measures on Ss in the control group. There was also a weakness in the criterion of grade point average for this group, since the majority of the Ss who participated had quite low grades initially, and there was a greater probability of them improving than of showing a decrement in grades. Nevertheless, the differences in amount of scholastic improvement between experimental and control groups was significant.

A group of experts¹ were called upon to listen to excerpts from several of the taped sessions in order to evaluate the counselor's effectiveness with this group and to offer suggestions for more effective communication in the extension of the pilot study. Their suggestions of defining goals more clearly, structuring early sessions to a greater extent and making clients aware of what counseling might potentially involve, dealing more directly with the counselor's stimulus value as a nun, bringing more closure

1. Gratitude is expressed to Drs. Frank Kobler, Le Roy Wauch, and Fred Spaner, and to graduate students James Hill, Ralph Messenbrink, and Ed Doyle.

Table 1
Median Changes Observed in Pilot Study

Variables	Experimental Group (N=7)	Control Group (N=7)
POI^a		
Sav	+7.0	-2.0
Ex	+2.0	+3.5
Fr	+6.0	+5.5
S	-2.0	0.0
Sr	-3.0	+4.5
Sa	-3.0	+3.5
Nc	0.0	-11.0
Sy	0.0	-16.5
A	0.0	+2.5
C	0.0	+3.0
Reading^a		
Rate	+5.0	+2.7
Comprehension	+3.0	-1.0
Vocabulary	-5.0	-1.4
G.P.A. ^b	+58	+10

^aPOI scores and reading scores expressed as standard scores with M = 50, S.D. = 10.

^bGrade Point Averages given as absolute value.

to discussions, and taking care to select Ss who would be able to communicate with the group were incorporated into the present study.

The present study concentrated on the population of an all girls' high school from which underachieving seniors were identified on the basis of a discrepancy of 20 or more percentile points between ability (as measured by the Scholastic Testing Service High School Placement Test) (STS HSPT) and achievement (as measured by previous grade point average). This definition of underachievement was a compromise between that of Snider (1953) who studied Ss (equated for IQ) in the upper third and bottom third of the class, and that of Broedel et al. (1960) who studied Ss in the upper 10% of the class in intelligence and the lower 90% of the class in grade point average. The present study was concerned not only with students of superior intelligence who were underachieving but also with those of bright normal and average intelligence (i.e. with IQ's above 100) who were not measuring up to their potential. The experimenter tried to avoid using only Ss with extremely low grades since, even by chance factors alone, such individuals would be more likely to show improvement than a lowering of grades, and the effects of the counseling could not be tested with as much certainty.

The experimenter met with the Ss identified in the manner described above and made them cognizant of the fact that they were not achieving up to their ability. She then offered the group counseling process as a way of helping them to become more aware of some of the sources of the difficulties that might be affecting their achievement in school. She pointed out that by becoming more aware of the problems that prevented them from studying effectively, the participants in group counseling should be better able to

cope with them and as a result, to realize their potentialities more fully. Ss were then asked to volunteer for the group sessions which were to commence the fourth week in September and end just prior to the Christmas vacation. Groups were to meet twice a week for a 50 minute period.

"Volunteers" rather than "captives" were used as subjects in this study since previous research had left open the question of whether the negative affect frequently apparent in those who were compelled to participate in a group might not have worked against therapeutic progress and in a sense, transferred responsibility for success from the individual to the therapist.

All volunteers were given the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS) to assess the motivational patterns within the individual. This test measures the relative strength of competing motivational patterns. Shostrom's Personal Orientation Inventory (POI), a measure of self-actualization, was also given as was Block's Adjective Q Sort for self-ideal discrepancy. Grade point averages as well as IQ measures from the STS HSPT were available on all subjects.

From the volunteers, an experimental group of 21 Ss was equated with a control group by matching means and standard deviations for IQ, previous grade point average, and self-ideal correlation between the two groups. Table 2 presents a summary picture of the two groups in terms of these variables. The t test revealed no significant differences between the two groups on any of these variables.

The groups were also compared on EPPS and POI measures. A summary of these comparisons may be seen in Table 3. A nonparametric measure, the Mann-Whitney U Test was employed in testing the significance of differences

Table 2
Comparison of Experimental and Control Groups
on Matching Criteria

Measures	Experimental		Control		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
I.Q.	119.5	7.10	117.4	8.25	.90
G.P.A.	2.1	.44	2.0	.45	.56
Q Sort (z)	.51	.45	.56	.37	.46

Table 3
Initial Comparison of Experimental and Control Groups
on Motivational Variables

EPPS variables	U	z	p	POI variables	U	z	p
ach	132.5	-2.23 ^a	.05	T _I	209.5	-0.29	NS
def	205.0	0.39	NS	T _C	214.5	0.15	NS
ord	168.5	1.32	NS	O	109.5	2.80	.01
exh	186.5	-0.86	NS	I	113.5	-2.70	.01
aut	165.5	-1.39	NS	SAV	155.0	-1.67	NS
aff	211.0	0.24	NS	Ex	176.5	-1.11	NS
int	201.5	0.62	NS	Fr	171.0	-1.25	NS
suc	211.5	0.23	NS	S	140.0	-2.03	.05
dom	174.5	-1.16	NS	Sr	181.5	-0.99	NS
aba	78.0	3.60	.01	Sa	147.5	-1.84	NS
nur	211.5	0.23	NS	Nc	200.5	0.52	NS
chg	174.0	-1.17	NS	Sy	208.5	-0.31	NS
end	208.5	-0.30	NS	A	132.5	-2.22	.05
het	178.5	1.06	NS	C	124.5	-2.45	.05
agg	159.5	-1.54	NS				

^aNegative z indicates higher need for control group.

between groups since these tests appeared to fulfill the assumptions of ordinal measurement only. It will be noted that some initial differences were apparent between the two groups and these will be discussed later in connection with the results of the experiment.

Ss in the experimental group were divided into three sub groups of 8, 7, and 6 respectively wherein they participated in 20 group counseling sessions meeting twice weekly for 50 minute periods. (Scheduling convenience necessitated having a different number of Ss in each group.) An attempt was made to include different "need" patterns (as measured by the EPPS) in each group in order to provide for variety. The two highest and two lowest scores for each S were examined to see if her pattern of scores was sufficiently different from that of other members to afford occasion for stimulation and interaction. Duplicates in high or low patterns were excluded from the group. Hopefully, this would allow for the creation of an atmosphere wherein clients would be able to examine and to accept the differences apparent among themselves.

An attempt was also made to select for the group individuals who would have potential for communicating with one another, since a number of investigators had previously pointed out the importance of this selective factor in facilitating or inhibiting group progress. (eg. Bach, 1954; Boenheim, 1957; Broedel et al., 1960) A similar observation had been made in the pilot study undertaken for the present investigation.

The group composition in terms of the Edwards' variables can be observed in Table 4. Manifest needs at or above the 80th percentile are marked H (high); those at or below the 20th percentile are designated as L (low).

Table 4

High and Low Manifest Needs of Experimental Groups

Scales	Group A		Group B		Group C	
	(N = 8)		(N = 7)		(N = 6)	
	H	L	H	L	H	L
ach	0	3	1	2	0	3
def	0	3	4	2	1	1
ord	1	1	0	2	0	2
exh	2	1	3	0	2	1
aut	0	0	1	2	2	1
aff	0	0	0	2	1	0
int	2	0	0	2	1	1
suc	1	0	1	1	1	0
dom	1	1	1	1	0	2
aba	6	0	4	1	4	0
nur	3	1	4	1	2	0
chg	1	3	2	0	1	0
end	1	3	2	1	0	0
het	2	2	1	2	1	0
agg	2	0	1	1	2	0

Note.--H refers to N above 80th percentile;
L refers to N below 20th percentile.

Ss in the control group were informed that because of their schedule and the limited number who could participate in each group, it would not be possible to include them in a group for the present. They were told, however, that the experimenter would give them another short battery of tests before the end of the semester and after this time she would meet with them in a group and talk over with them their test results and implications for study. This was done for both experimental and control groups after the termination of the experimental period.

Ss in the experimental groups were approached in the first group meeting with the notion that there were various reasons why they might not be achieving up to their ability. It was suggested that perhaps their poor achievement was the result of poor study habits; that it might be due to improper motivation; again, it might be that they were overly anxious (i.e. "nervous"), a factor that could inhibit concentration; or that underachievement might be the result of personal problems. Ss were told that talking about their difficulties with one another was sometimes a help in enabling them to see themselves more clearly and to gain added insights from others' contributions to the group. Ss were asked to commit themselves to regular attendance at the sessions, and the importance of this factor for the development of the group was then pointed out. (All Ss agreed to this commitment.) It was hoped in this way to avoid one of the pitfalls often inherent in research on volunteer groups--that of having Ss "drop out" of the group before its termination.

Ss were also told that the topics for the group would not be structured; rather, it would be left up to group members to talk about what they felt was most meaningful. They were encouraged to express themselves freely, and

the counselor took an eclectic approach, using primarily the non-directive method, but supplementing it with clarifications, interpretations posed as questions or suggestions, more direct questions, and summaries in instances where these were felt to be effective. All sessions were taped.

At the conclusion of the sessions, both experimental and control groups were again given the POI and the adjective Q Sort to assess any changes that might have taken place. Changes in grade point averages for the two groups were also compared. Since the study did not attempt to measure motivational changes but only motivational patterns related to underachievement, the EPPS was not given again at the end of the counseling sessions.

It was deemed more feasible to have the subjects rate themselves on adjustment measures than to have the therapist or other observers rate them, since the former evaluation would be more likely to have an influence on their performance in school, and hence, on their grades. Moreover, the bias of the therapist or others involved in the research could in this way be avoided.

As a preliminary observation, scores on the EPPS and pre-measures on the POI were compared with those of the normative samples in order to determine whether there were any particular characteristics of the sample that differentiated them from the norm group.

Then, to test the first three hypotheses, data were graphed in order to determine the distribution of scores. As might have been expected in view of the selective factor, the data did not distribute themselves normally, and hence, it was not feasible to use a parametric test in determining the significance of changes resulting from counseling. A nonparamet-

ric measure, the Mann-Whitney U Test was used. This test, which is dependent on ranking scores, closely approaches the parametric t test in its power to reject the null hypothesis (Its power-efficiency is about 95%), and it is not restricted by the assumptions of the t test. The Mann-Whitney Test has another advantage over the t test in that conclusions drawn from its employment can be generalized regardless of the shape of the distribution of scores in the population. A further rationale for using the Mann-Whitney Test in this research was the fact that the personality scales used appeared to meet only the requirements of ordinal measurement.

The significance of changes in grade point average, in self-actualization tendency, and in self-ideal congruence occurring during the experimental period were tested for the two groups to see if increments could be attributed to the counseling sessions. Self-ideal congruence was measured by calculating Pearson r's for "self" and "ideal" descriptions both before and after the counseling sessions. Correlations for "pre" and "post" self descriptions and for "pre" and "post" ideal descriptions were also calculated in order to determine wherein the changes had occurred. Correlations were transformed to z scores in order to obtain comparable measures of progress.

To investigate the last hypothesis, protocols of Ss in the experimental group who improved in grade point average were separated from those who did not improve, and the Mann-Whitney U Test was again employed to see if there were any significant differences in motivational patterns (as measured by the EPPS scales) between them.

The five per cent level of significance was set up as a criterion for acceptance of the research hypotheses.

Chapter IV

Results

An attempt was made to compare the population of underachievers used in the present study with the normative populations used by Edwards and by Shostrom on the EPPS and the POI respectively in order to identify the particular characteristics of the sample.

Since normative data were given in terms of means and standard deviations, it seemed most feasible to use a t test in comparing the sample with the norm group. This was not, however, altogether satisfactory particularly in the case of the POI. Ss in the present study had been encouraged to answer all the questions on the test if they possible could, and the number of questions answered was considerably greater for these Ss than for the norm group. This, among other factors, affected the variance of the scores for the Ss under study, and since the variances for the two populations were not equal, the assumptions necessary for the t test were not met and results were spurious, making adequate comparison impossible.

The fact that a greater number of questions had been answered by Ss in the present study led to another difficulty. It was possible to express the time dimension and the support dimension on the POI either in terms of two ratios or in terms of four separate scores. If ratios were used, then the intervals between scores were not equal and a t test would not be applic-

able. On the other hand, if the separate scores were compared, Ss under study showed significantly more "inner" directedness as well as significantly more "other" directedness than the normative sample. Other scales were affected by this factor also, so that the present sample tended to be higher than the normative group on most of the POI scales. (Normative group being female college freshmen)

Table 5 presents a comparison of the various subscales of the EPPS. The underachievers on whom the present research was conducted were found to have significantly greater need (two tailed test) for exhibition, abasement, nurturance, and aggression than the normative group. Need for deference, order, dominance, and endurance was significantly less among the underachievers than among those in the normative group.

In testing the hypothesis that female underachievers would show a significant gain in grade point average as a result of participation in group counseling, the amount of change between pre and post grade point averages for both experimental and control groups (see Appendix II) were compared by means of the Mann-Whitney U Test, and results revealed a U of 163.5 (z of 1.43) which was significant at the .08 level. While this value approached significance at the .05 level, it did not reach the required level for acceptance of the research hypothesis.¹ A graphical presentation of median changes in grade point average for each group is made in Figure 1.

Actually, both groups showed a decrement in grades during the experimen-

1. A t test actually revealed significance at the .05 level, but since the parametric assumptions were not met, it was somewhat spurious. Use of the nonparametric test for these data actually made it more difficult to reject the null hypothesis, though results could be generalized to a greater extent.

Table 5
Comparison of Underachievers (N = 42)
with Normative Sample (N = 749)

EPPS variables	MEAN Norm Group	MEAN Underachievers	C.R.
ach	13.08	12.29	-1.48
def	12.40*	10.86	-2.53
ord	10.24*	8.83	-2.42
exh	14.28	15.36*	+2.03
aut	12.29	13.12	+1.25
aff	17.40	16.81	-1.09
int	17.32	16.74	-0.76
suc	12.53	13.26	+1.07
dom	14.18*	12.81	-2.14
aba	15.11	17.43**	+2.91
nur	16.42	18.12**	+2.74
chg	17.20	18.10	+1.41
end	12.63**	10.67	-2.59
het	14.34	13.12	-1.34
agg	10.59	12.50**	+3.03

* Significantly greater at .05 level

** Significantly greater at .01 level

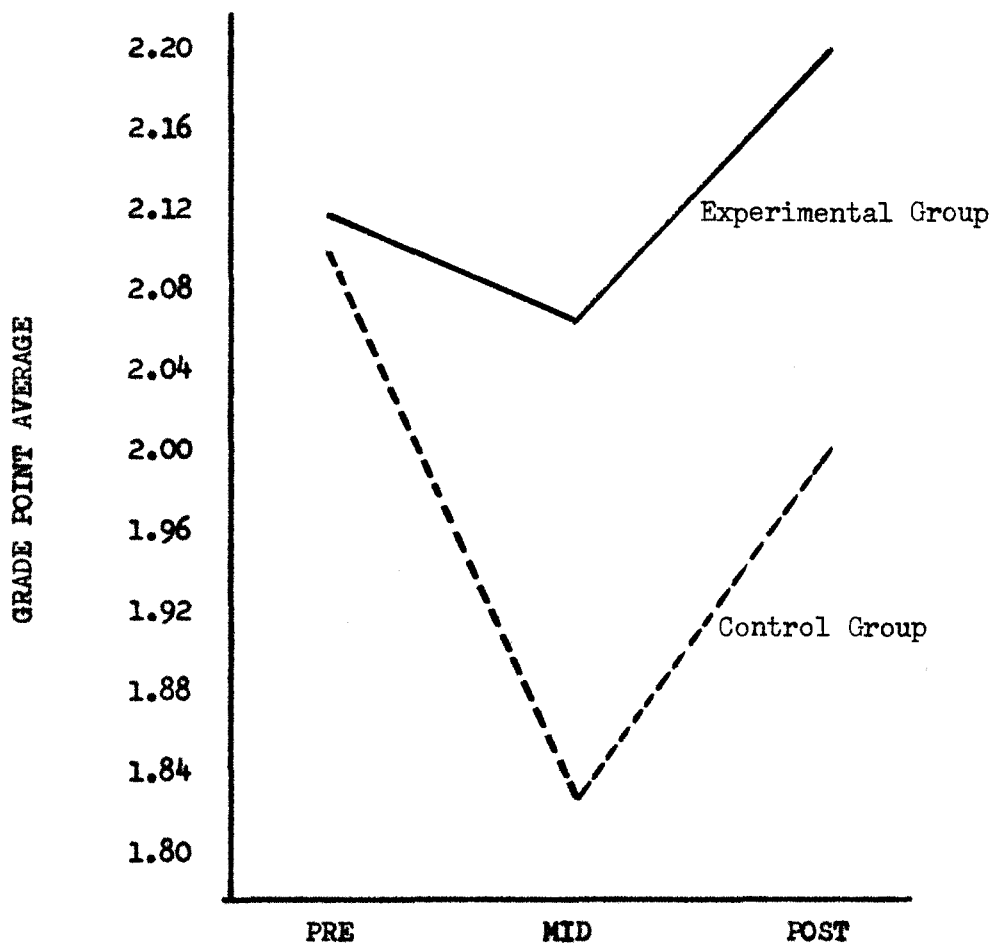


Figure 1. Median Changes in grade point average

tal period when the average for the senior year was considered. The experimental group showed considerable improvement, however, during the second quarter of the counseling. (The experimental group's mean decrease in cumulative grade point average was actually .1; the control group's decrease was .4). Results must be interpreted, however, in view of the fact that the class as a whole showed a mean reduction of .4 in cumulative grade point average. This variable was outside the field of experimental control, and results did favor the experimental group in that a greater number of them improved than did their corresponding controls.

The hypothesis that female underachievers would show a growth in self-actualization as a result of participation in group counseling was tested by comparing pre and post measures on the POI scales. Results of this analysis (on the basis of the Mann-Whitney U Test) showed that certain of the scales favored the experimental group. A summary of findings is presented in Table 6. A comparison of groups may also be seen graphically in Figure 2.

It can be seen from Table 6 and from the graph, that scales measuring self actualizing values, self acceptance, and acceptance of aggression showed significant changes in favor of the experimental group. The counseled group also showed a considerable decrease on the scale measuring direction by social pressure (.06 level of significance) and a tendency (.10 level) to become more spontaneous in the expression of their feelings as a result of participation in group counseling.

In testing the third hypothesis, it was necessary to make changes comparable; hence r 's were transformed to z scores, and the Mann-Whitney U Test was again employed. It was found that underachievers who participated

Table 6
Differences in Amount of Change
between Experimental and Control Groups
on the Personal Orientation Inventory

Scale	U	z	p
T _I	197.0	-0.60 ^a	NS
T _C	196.5	0.61	NS
O	159.0	-1.55	NS
I	168.0	1.32	NS
SAV	150.0	1.79	.05
Ex	212.5	0.20	NS
Fr	194.5	0.66	NS
S	165.0	1.41	NS
Sr	210.0	0.27	NS
Sa	155.0	1.67	.05
Nc	191.5	0.74	NS
Sy	193.5	0.71	NS
A	135.0	2.17	.02
C	207.5	-0.33	NS

^aNegative z indicates greater decline for experimental group than control group.

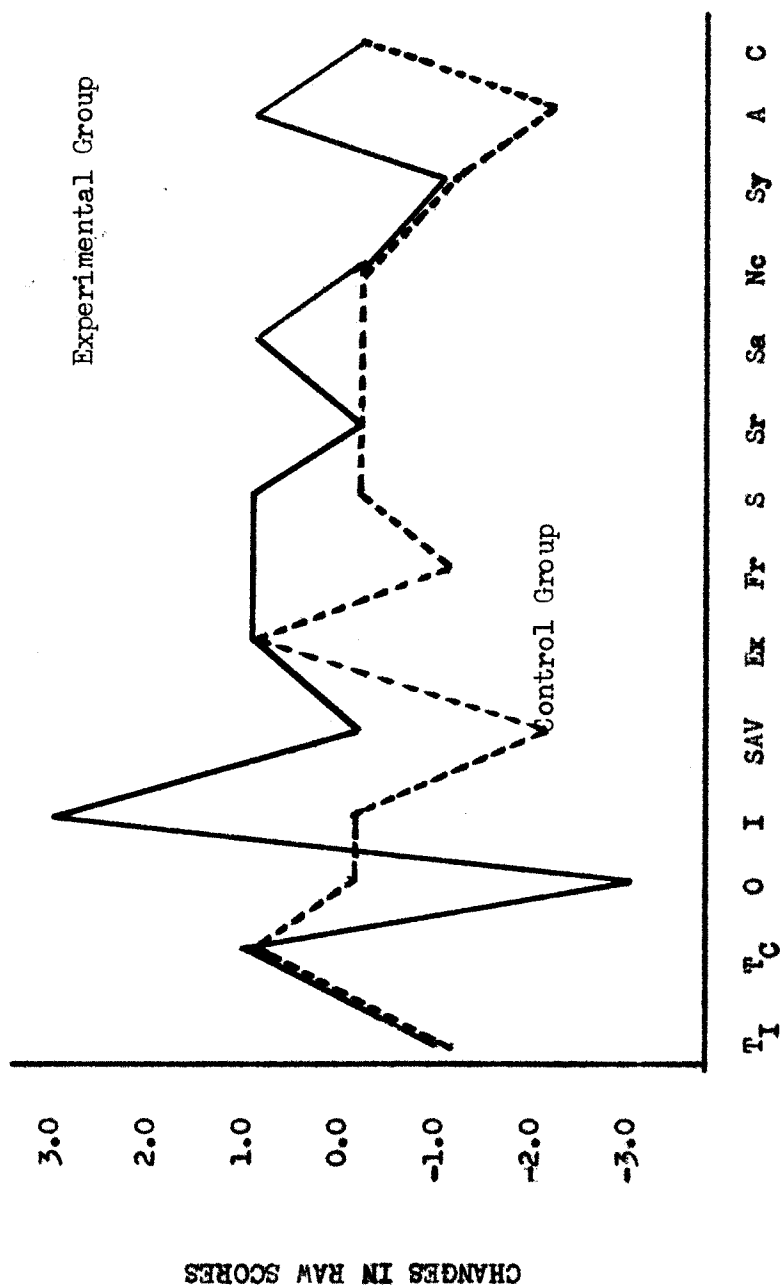


Figure 2. Median changes on POI scales.

in the group sessions showed significantly greater growth in congruence between perception of self and ideal self than Ss who did not receive group counseling. (For measures of self-ideal congruence, see Appendix III.) The U value of 129 was significant at the .01 level. Figure 3 presents a summary of pre and post measures on the Q Sort.

Prior to the counseling period, median correlations for the experimental and control groups respectively were .51 and .54. Following the experimental period, the medians of the r's were .61 and .49 respectively. These results give confirmation for the third hypothesis. It was observed too, that the greatest changes took place in perception of the self rather than in perception of the ideal. Median r's of pre and post ideal correlations for the experimental and control groups were respectively .77 and .81. Median r's for self perception before and after counseling were .67 for the experimental group and .63 for the control group.

Finally, an attempt was made to see what patterns differentiated between "improvers" and "non-improvers" who participated in the groups. The criterion for "improvement" in this particular part of the study was increase in grade point average. (Reasons for using this criterion will become clear later.) On the basis of a two tailed test (Mann-Whitney), it was found that "improvers" were significantly less motivated by needs for autonomy and intraception than were the Ss who did not improve. There was also a tendency, however, for the improvers to be more motivated by needs for nurturance and endurance than Ss who did not improve academically.

To summarize, then, counseled Ss did not show a significant gain in grade point average over non-counseled Ss, though there was a strong ten-

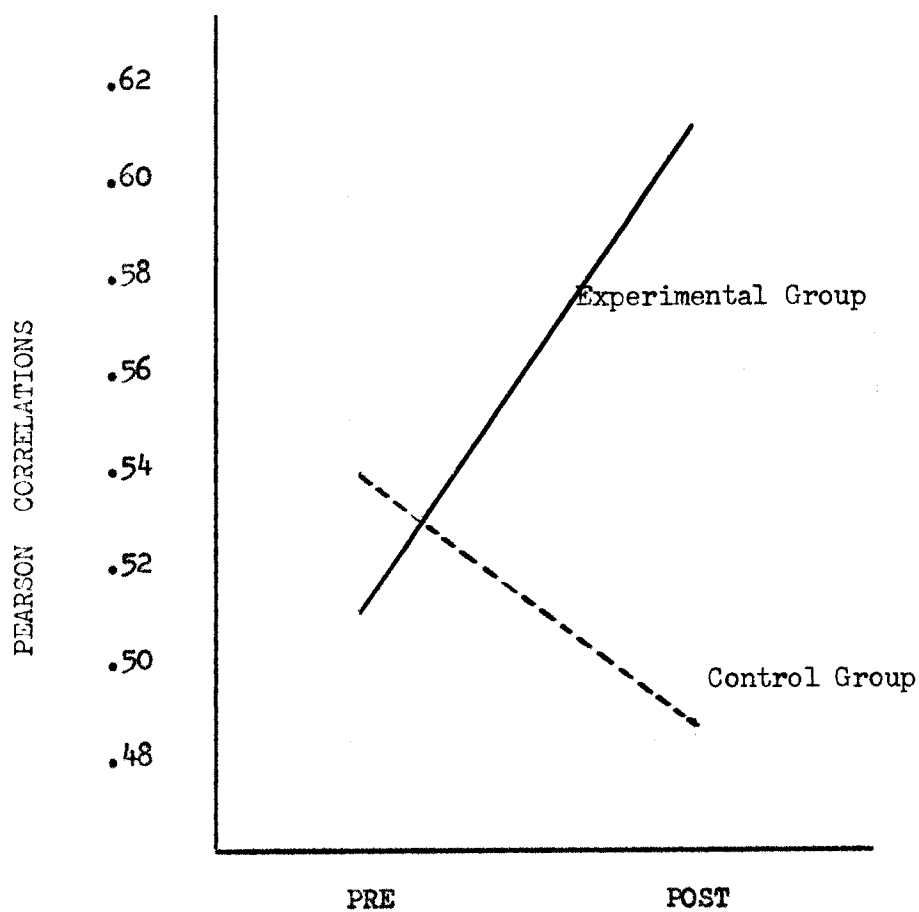


Figure 3. Median Correlations between
Self and Ideal

dency in the direction of confirming the hypothesis ($p .08$). Counseled Ss did show significant gains over the control group of Ss on four of the measures of self-actualization encompassed by the POI. Counseled Ss also showed significant gains over the control group in self-ideal congruence after their participation in 20 group counseling sessions. Ss who improved as a result of counseling had significantly less need for autonomy and intraception than those who did not improve.

Chapter V

Analysis and Interpretation

It has been shown that considerable profit can accrue for underachievers as a result of their participation in group counseling sessions over a short period of time (twenty 50 minute sessions meeting twice weekly). If these findings can be generalized to other populations, they can have considerable implications both for students and for teachers and administrators. But it may be well to examine some of the results in greater detail.

The motivational patterns which characterized the underachievers in the present study are consistent, to some extent, with previous motivational patterns found in male underachievers.

The Ss under study manifested significantly higher EPPS scores than the norm group showed on scales measuring aggression or need to criticize and attack contrary points of view, nurturance or need to show affection to others, abasement or need to submit themselves, and exhibition or need to be the center of attention. They were significantly lower than the norm group, however, on scales measuring deference or willingness to accept the leadership of others, order or need to plan ahead, dominance or need to direct others, and endurance or willingness to persevere at a task.

While these characteristics were observed in the underachieving group as a whole, there seemed to be two distinct motivational patterns that

emerged among the Ss. One group manifested low need for deference, order, and endurance with a high need for aggression, exhibition, and abasement. These Ss tended to ignore the suggestions of others, but at the same time, they had difficulty in planning or persevering at a task themselves; they tended to blame others for their failures or to use manipulative devices to focus attention on themselves. They still recognized the need for submission, however, in attaining their goals.

The second group of Ss had a low need for dominance accompanied by a high need for abasement and nurturance. These subjects tended to be more passive and dependent on others for support. Their need for close contact with others superceded their need to achieve in school, and their insecurity in handling and expressing themselves apparently led to anxiety which inhibited school achievement.

Needs for deference, dominance, endurance, exhibition, abasement, nurturance, and aggression veered in the same direction from the norm group as those of Klett's high school students, and these differences were all significant for both groups. The underachievers showed a trend opposite to that of Klett's Ss (1957) on needs for order, autonomy, affiliation, and heterosexuality.

While the change in grade point average during the experimental period favored the counseled groups, the difference between groups was one that could occur eight per cent of the time by chance; hence the criterion for acceptance of the research hypothesis (5 per cent level) was not met.

It was remarked previously that both groups actually showed a decrement in grades. When semester averages were considered, only three Ss in the

control group showed an improvement in grades, and only eight of the counseled Ss improved. However, these results must be viewed in light of the fact that the class as a whole showed a considerably greater decrease in their grades than the counseled Ss. One possible explanation for the lower grades might have been that seniors do tend to let up on their studies in view of increasing outside interests and extracurricular activities during their senior year. (On the other hand, pressures imposed by acceptance policies of colleges would seem to have the opposite effect.) It is quite possible too that the particular teachers whom the students had in their senior year tended to mark them more stringently. No prior study had been done to determine "trends" in grading, and it will be recalled that previous research (Richardson, 1964; Ofman, 1964) showed some discrepancies with regard to grade "trends" among college students.

Although the differences in grade point average between groups did not reach significance when the semester average was used as the criterion, yet it was observed that the experimental Ss showed decided gains during the second quarter of the counseling sessions. Twelve Ss improved here, while only nine had poorer grades. This was apparently due to increased self-acceptance and self-confidence which enabled them to function more effectively in the classroom. It was not until after the first quarter, however, that Ss became involved in the counseling sessions to the extent that they were able to profit substantially.

It was also seen that as a result of group counseling, the experimental Ss, while recognizing their weaknesses, were better able to accept themselves and their aggressive tendencies. Shostrom's scale measuring self

actualizing values likewise demonstrated a significant difference in change between experimental and control Ss. Such characteristics as spontaneity, trust in others, flexibility, acceptance of responsibility, empathy, tolerance, and freedom to be oneself are tapped by this scale. The change noted, however, was due to only a slight increase on the scale measuring self actualizing values on the part of the experimental Ss. Subjects in the control group showed a decrement on this scale which may well have resulted from increased pressures occurring in their senior year with which they were not able to cope. While Ss in the counseled group did not show a very great increase on the scale measuring self actualizing values, it is possible that they were able to maintain their 'status quo' by being in an environment where they could express their anxieties over current pressures, and thereby become better equipped to deal with them. It can be observed, then, that on this as on other scales, changes were relative rather than absolute.

Through talking out some of their difficulties, the counselees were able to gain support from others in the group and to win acceptance even while disagreeing with certain members of the group. Clients reported a growth in self confidence, and as a correlary, they became less dependent on others for the direction of their lives; their need for acting in accordance with social conformity was considerably lessened.

The increased self acceptance noted apparently took place through changes that occurred in the 'self' rather than the 'ideal self.' This was shown in the significant growth in self-ideal congruence that was noted in the post-counseling assessment. Very little change occurred in ratings of ideal self, but considerable changes were noted in self perception.

A factor that deserves mention in the interpretation of results is the comparability of pre-measures on the EPPS and the POI. While age, IQ, grade point average, self-ideal congruence, and socio-economic status had been equated for experimental and control groups, yet it was not possible to control several initial differences on the personality measures. The experimental group had less need for achievement (.05 level) and greater need for abasement (.01 level) than the control group. Theoretically, the difference in achievement motivation should favor the control group, since it might be assumed that if all Ss were untreated, those with higher motivation to achieve would be more successful (other factors being equal). On the other hand, it might be expected that Ss who were more willing to submit themselves to school authorities and to accept the blame for their own misdeeds would be more likely to succeed (i.e. to study), and in this sense, the experimental group would be favored.

On the POI scales, the control group scored higher than the experimental group on scales measuring spontaneity (.05 level), acceptance of aggression (.05 level), and capacity for intimate contact (.05 level). They were also higher on inner directedness (.01 level) and lower on other directedness (.01 level). These differences might be considered in two ways. From one point of view, it would seem that the control group (in the light of the particular scales that were elevated) might have a greater capacity to relate to others in counseling, and hence to derive more benefit from the sessions. From another point of view, however, since the control group's initial scores were higher, it might be expected that the experimental group would have a greater probability of improving than would the control Ss. These factors

must be considered when interpreting results. Again, it must be noted here that changes were relative rather than absolute.

It was striking, and at first glance, contradictory, that while the counseled Ss showed a significant growth in self-ideal congruence and in certain aspects of self-actualization, and while they were able to maintain a considerably higher grade point average than the control group, yet of the eight Ss in the experimental group who showed better grades at the end of the semester, five showed a decrease in self-ideal congruence and three showed an overall decrease on the POI scales. (Two of the Ss included here showed decrements on both personality measures.). This was particularly noteworthy in view of the fact that only seven of the experimental Ss showed a lessening of self-ideal congruence whereas 14 of them improved. Similarly, only six of the experimental Ss showed an overall trend of lowered scores on the POI.

Several factors seem to have been operating here. An analysis of EPPS patterns for improvers and non-improvers brought some of them to the fore. Clients who improved in grades as a result of counseling had significantly less need for autonomy and intraception than Ss who did not show improvement in their grades. On the head of this fact, it would seem that Ss who had a greater need to look into their own and others' motives, and who were independent, critical of authority, and "non-conforming" did not improve their grades during the semester in which they participated in the groups. Ss who improved were inclined to have greater need for nurturance than the non-improvers. Richardson (1964), it will be recalled, found similarly (on the basis of clinical observation rather than tests) that college students who

improved as a result of counseling had a great need for acceptance, were dependent, and were seldom resourceful. Apparently their needs were satisfied to some extent by the group sessions.

While Ss who had higher needs for autonomy and intraception did not show higher grades following the experimental period, they did tend to show self-growth. It would seem then, that counseling had some beneficial effects for both groups, but that it had affected both quite differently.

It might be remarked here too that not all the Ss who improved in grades manifested this same 'need' pattern. Another very important factor influencing changes and growth was the particular group in which each subject participated. All but two members of Group C showed an improvement in grades during the experimental period. (When only the second quarter was considered, all but one S improved.) Yet, there were only two members of this particular group who showed an increment in self-ideal congruence. As it happened, the members of Group C actually became involved at a deeper level of communication than any of the groups studied. They arrived at a stage where they were able to be more self-critical and where they were able to give and take criticism from others in the group. Members of Group C were more verbal in reporting self-growth at the end of the counseling sessions; yet on the self-rating scale, they actually showed lowered correlations. This particular group was also the most reluctant to see the sessions come to a close. It would seem that the Ss in Group C actually did improve, and that being less anxious about themselves, they were able to function more effectively in school and consequently to obtain better grades. The more negative appraisal of themselves on the Q Sort (All but one member of the group im-

proved on the POI.) could well be due to a lowering of their defenses, and as such, it could be viewed as a positive sign. Broedel et al. (1960), it will be recalled, made a similar observation on the subjects they studied.

While all three experimental groups met with the same counselor, they developed quite differently from a dynamic point of view, and they arrived at various depth levels. It might be of interest here to examine some of the developmental factors involved in the different groups.

Discussions in all three groups were handled primarily in a non-directive manner, yet from the very beginning, interaction in the groups differed widely. The first group session was structured in the sense that Ss were told that the group meetings might afford them an opportunity for talking over some of the reasons for their underachievement. In this way, it was pointed out, it would be hoped that they would come to a better understanding of themselves and thus be better able to deal with their problems. Possible avenues of departure were then suggested.

Group counseling was a new experience for all the Ss who participated, and they were initially quite anxious over the failure of this experience to meet with previous expectations (i.e. counselor asks questions, students answer questions; then counselor solves problems and tells students what they should do) This idea--in one form or another--was verbalized on a number of occasions. Students in all three groups were likewise quite defensive about their grades initially. Early sessions focused largely on 'ventilation' and students verbalized their lack of ability, unreasonableness of parents and teachers in expecting too much of them, lack of interest in studies, lack of teachers who motivated them, etc.

Group A was initially quite inhibited by the tape recorder and clients in the group were threatened by the counselor whom they saw as a nun in the roll of an 'authority' figure and research investigator rather than in the roll of a counselor. They were distrustful as to how she was going to "use them" and as to why she was giving them tests that "delved into their inner motives" (even though the purpose of the tests had been explained to the Ss before they took them). During the first few sessions, the group developed largely on the basis of an individual-to-counselor relationship rather than on the basis of a group relationship. Despite attempts made by the counselor to turn questions back to the group, they did not respond unless asked individually. Feelings about the tests and about the research were dealt with in the first few sessions and periodically after that. Feelings concerning fear of the counselor and unwillingness to talk over problems with one another when they didn't really know others in the group very well were also paramount.

Group B began in a more 'relaxed' atmosphere, though the members' 'outgoing' behavior seemed to cover considerable anxiety. Initial communication of Group B was generally good though more superficial in the expression of feeling than that of Group A. Group members skimmed reasons for their underachievement touching on lack of interest in studies, lack of motivation from teachers, unfairness of grades as a criterion for achievement, unreasonableness of teachers and parents in demanding so much, and to a limited extent, they discussed their own need for divergence and consequent lack of study. Almost immediately Group B became 'group centered', and an initial theme of need for praise and recognition of their own ideas

and an attack on what they felt was "not achievement" but "conformity" began to develop.

Group C progressed even differently in its early period of development. After the counselor set the stage for the first session, all members of the group began competing with one another for the floor. On occasion, there were as many as three girls speaking at once with really no one listening to what the other one had to say. The counselor was largely ignored in this group during the first two sessions, and the blame for underachievement was focused on teachers.

The initial 'breakthrough' in Group A was made following a rather lengthy silence, when the counselor asked if the silence and reticence to become involved might not be due to a real fear as to what the girls in the group or the counselor might think if they were to express their feelings. She also asked how this same anxiety might be related to school achievement. Some of the Ss began, reticently, to participate and they focused on fear of stuttering, fear of blushing, fear of what peers might think, and fear of nuns. These fears were then discussed in the light of inhibiting classroom participation. The counselor was largely reflective during this phase of the group sessions, trying to focus on the Ss' need for trust and yet fear of trusting others.

As the group began talking about fear of and anger toward teachers, the focus was again turned toward the counselor and her relation to the group, and a good deal of hostility became manifest. Individuals in the group were "angry" at the counselor for inferring that they "felt angry" when they "didn't really go on a tirade" about anything. They didn't want her to "tell

them how they felt" since they "knew how they felt" and it sounded "worse when someone else said it." They didn't like being "psychoanalyzed." This initial "airing" of feeling was followed by what appeared to be some guilt and much concern for the counselor. Their main anxiety, however, seemed to center on whether the counselor resented their remarks and whether she would retaliate. When Ss were reassured that they were to feel free to express their feelings, they became somewhat more relaxed and confident. They also became more accepting of the counselor and of her method of dealing with the group. This difficulty was never completely worked out with Group A, however.

Most of the sessions were carried by five members of Group A, the others being too reticent to express themselves unless addressed directly. The silence of these individuals was brought to the fore several times by members of the group, but throughout the sessions, they did not establish enough trust in members of the group to express themselves freely.

There was some focus on home problems that made study difficult; there was much focus on problems of relating to authority and to peers at school. The group was, in general, quite reluctant to get into personal and home problems, and when, on two occasions, they became quite involved, they were somewhat threatened and quickly backed away at the following session.

While some positive means for improving grades were suggested towards the end of the group meetings, the adjustment of Group A appeared to be rather a superficial one. Though they reported better facility in expressing themselves, there was some disappointment over the fact that Ss didn't feel the sessions had helped them to succeed better in school.

There seemed to be a number of significant problem areas that were avoided by Group A, and the termination of the counseling sessions after 20 sessions was, in all likelihood, premature.

Another difficulty presented itself with Group A. Initially, Ss had volunteered for counseling; yet they were asked to commit themselves to regular attendance at the group meetings in order to assure control of this factor. One member of the group became disgruntled after the first few sessions, and the fact that she was kept in the group had an effect similar to that of 'forcing' individuals to participate in counseling. Her negative affect tended to impede the group's progress.

Group B continued with very good group communication throughout the first five sessions. They touched on feelings of anger toward parents for punishing low grades, anger toward teachers who favored girls, anger toward peers who tried to win the favor of teachers through superficial means, frustration in being compared to brothers and sisters, need for recognition, need to "act out" as an attention getting device, and need to be independent and autonomous.

It wasn't until the sixth session that Group B became rather concerned about the counselor's research. They were beginning to touch upon significant and sensitive areas and were becoming involved without realizing it. As they began to reflect on their involvement and its implications, they became somewhat startled and made an attempt to back away and take a look.

During the sixth session, there was much anxious questioning of the counselor on her research and the use she planned to make of the tapes, etc. by the Ss. They expressed a feeling of relief and exhibited more of a feel-

ing of trust for the counselor when this area was explained to them.

Following this meeting, however, there seemed to be a great deal more consciousness of the research and the tapes. A number of the sessions began with quite irrelevant material in a seeming effort to ward off getting into more personal matters at a greater depth. Counselees would sometimes continue at length in this fashion until the counselor pinned them down to focus on a particular point. Only two of the group members were willing to accept the counselor's interpretation of their 'light chatter' as a form of resistance or reluctance to get involved at a deeper level. Members of Group B, from the beginning, verbalized and demonstrated a great need for recognition and acceptance both from adults and from peers, and this factor may well have kept them defensive to some extent.

There were periodic episodes of rather deep involvement followed by sessions of superficiality and retreat. Subjects discussed feelings toward teachers and toward parents, the need to be someone, and the need for expressing their feelings. They were quite verbal about their feelings of frustration when restrictions were placed upon them. While they recognized many of the restrictions as good, they wanted to have a hand in deciding upon them.

The counselor's role was largely one of reflecting feelings, clarifying thoughts, and focusing on similarities and differences in Ss' reactions during this period. She occasionally focused on the "skirting" efforts and the meaning it might have in relation to the group.

About half way through the sessions, which significantly enough, was

right after midterm examinations, Ss focused on the lack of positive results from the counseling sessions as far as school grades were concerned. They turned their attention to the counselor expressing disappointment that the group experience had not met with their expectations, i.e. that the counselor hadn't "advised them what to do," and that there was real doubt that they were getting anywhere. They were "tired of discovering for themselves." The counselor tried to focus on the feeling of the group, and the subjects' need for authority and structure despite their negative attitudes towards it. This factor was then brought into focus and played a significant part in the remainder of the sessions. Deep feelings about relations with parents were expressed, and the group developed a somewhat more open and less defensive attitude as well as a freedom to disagree with one another. But this depth of expression was again followed by a retreat and an expression of resentment against the counselor for what they felt was her interest in them for research rather than for personal reasons.

During the final phase of the counseling sessions, Ss discussed positive ways of helping themselves to meet some of their problems more adequately in order that they might be freed for more efficient study, but this phase was developed only to a limited extent. Ss in Group B verbalized rather mixed feelings as to whether they had been helped by the group sessions. They felt that to some extent they were more accepting and understanding of one another, but that they themselves had not benefited to any great extent as far as their studies were concerned. Some of the Ss in this group did verbalize more facility in acting on their own ideas and in expressing themselves.

The initial 'breakthrough' with Group C occurred during the third group meeting when the counselor asked if the group's skirting and excessive chatter might not be an effort to ward off becoming involved with one another. After a brief silence, the group members agreed that such was the case. Focus was then placed on the difficulty of talking to a nun, the uncertainty in not knowing what she might expect, uneasiness in talking with any adult, and lack of trust for one another and what tales might be carried out of the group. There followed shortly a significant session at which only two members were present. (Four were out of school.) They openly discussed their feelings about other members in the group and their reticence to express themselves when certain members were present. It was suggested that Ss bring these feelings up when the entire group was present in order that they might attempt to work them through. This suggestion was acted upon, and there followed significant discussions on the threat of dropping one's defensiveness all of a sudden, the need for trust to grow gradually, the difficulty of speaking in front of people (rehearsing to self but being unable to express self publicly), difficulty in taking criticism, and tendency to "shut others out" because of insecurity. A group cohesiveness developed with members of Group C and there was a growing openness among the clients in this group. Further topics focused on attitudes towards teachers and parents, jealousy over sibs, social pressures on going to college, and attitudes on dating and sex.

At the ninth session, Ss turned to evaluate what they had accomplished and they expressed a feeling of having been helped psychologically but not scholastically, since they really hadn't discussed much in the way of school

problems. Ss were encouraged by the counselor to bring up what was most meaningful to them at the time, since their feelings and attitudes undoubtedly had a considerable effect on their school performance. During this phase, as with the other two groups, the counselor's role was largely one of reflecting and clarifying feelings of the group as well as focusing on individual differences.

Significantly, with Group C as with the other two groups, there was a change of attitude immediately following midterms. Ss were disappointed at their lack of achievement and they expressed dissatisfaction with the counselor who really hadn't given them any "advice." This, again, turned to a focus on need for authority vs. resentment, and criticism of those in authority.

The change of attitude was only a temporary retreat, for Ss followed with very meaningful discussions on need for self-discovery in learning why they acted differently with different people; on difficulties encountered in turning emotions on and off or trying to keep them from bursting forth in an uncontrolled manner; on feelings of frustration and depression; on the anxieties of being a senior and having adulthood thrown upon them all at once; on feelings of anger towards parents and sibs; on difficulty in admitting when wrong, and on ways of handling anger.

Ss in Group C expressed much regret in seeing the sessions come to a close. They had developed a deep trust in one another and reported positive improvement in the sense that they felt they weren't "bottling up" their emotions so much, but felt freer to express them. They verbalized a greater feeling of freedom to be themselves in the classroom, and to say what

they really felt as opposed to what someone else wanted to hear.

But despite the positive verbal response and the evident increase in grades and POI scores for members of Group C (presumably as a result of decreased inner tension), these were the Ss whose self-ideal congruence scores dropped during the counseling sessions. In view of the former factors, it is believed that this decrement was due to a lowering of defenses and a consequent ability to see the negative aspects of themselves as a result of counseling.

Material discussed in the counseling sessions for all three groups tended to support previous research on some of the dynamic factors related to underachievement. The subjects recognized their inadequacy, but they tended to blame others; they were dependent on others for structuring things for them, yet they resented restrictions placed upon them; they had a great need for acceptance and positive recognition from others, yet by their behavior they oftentimes frustrated that need.

Probably one of the most beneficial aspects of the group sessions for many of the subjects was that of being given an opportunity to ventilate their feelings. The development of feelings of trust in others and confidence in self also seemed to play a vital role in the changes that occurred. (While these changes were slight, they were significant.) Some insight was also achieved, but in varying degrees depending on the individual client.

While it is not feasible with the particular group of subjects under study here, it would be well in future research (and other investigators have noted the need for this too) to use Ss who could be followed up and studied for later adjustment. Would there be differences in later adjust-

ment between those who appeared to be superficially more satisfied with themselves following counseling and those whose self evaluation was more negative, and yet, whose depth of communication and increased school performance would indicate better adjustment at a deeper level? This investigator believes that there would be changes in self-ideal congruence after a period of time which would favor the latter group. Only further research, however, can bear this out.

In general, it was felt that most of the Ss had been helped to some degree by their experience in the group. The rigidity of the controls for research perhaps served as an obstacle, preventing some individuals from profiting to the fullest extent. While 'dropouts' from counseling have previously created problems in analysing gainful aspects of the group experience, yet reflecting back on the group sessions under study here, the investigator feels at present that Ss could have profited more (particularly those in Group A) if there had been more flexibility in allowing for dropouts and attendance. Even though they had volunteered to participate in the groups, Ss felt that their freedom "not to attend sessions" was rather restricted because of their "commitment," and they tended to transfer much of the responsibility for their improvement to the counselor. Ofman (1964), among others, had previously observed that "dropouts" from counseling didn't improve their grades. On the basis of the present study, however, it appears that Ss who are not permitted to drop out when they are dissatisfied, even though they have initially volunteered for the group, likewise do not improve their grades, and in addition, they can impede the progress of other group members.

In support of the investigator's hypothesis just mentioned, it was observed that members of Group C experienced one of their first communications of genuine feeling when four members were absent.

It seemed that some of the Ss under study here had anticipated an almost magical quality in "joining a group and getting better grades." Perhaps less emphasis should have been placed on the reason for their initial selection. It was the counselor's theory that improved grades would be an indirect (i.e. as a result of better personal adjustment) rather than a direct outcome of counseling. Yet in identifying Ss as underachievers and in focusing on problems that might have been causing poor grades, some of the Ss came to think of this as the primary objective of the group sessions and to expect the counselor to play more the role of an "advisor" than of one who would help them to reflect on their feelings. On the other hand, it has been noted in previous research (Baymur and Patterson, 1960) that Ss who were not aware of their underachievement tended to avoid getting into significant problem areas. A happy medium must be struck here.

Since nonparametric tests were used to verify the significance of results in this experiment, the findings can be generalized to populations that do not assume a normal distribution. Changes observed, however, were relative with respect to the two groups studied. This factor, along with the limited N of 42 would tend to preclude the generality of findings without further research. As a method of helping underachievers to deal with some of the problems peculiar to them, however, group counseling was found to have considerable merit.

Chapter VI

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to test the effectiveness of group counseling with female high school students who were underachieving academically

Previous research had pointed to a number of relationships between underachievement and emotional problems or personality difficulties. Snider (1953), McCandlish (1958), Gebhart and Hoyt (1958), and Drake (1962), among others, undertook research in identifying the dynamics of under-achievers, and such characteristics as impulsivity, anxiety, insecurity, self-centeredness, and inability to accept the blame for their failures frequently emerged concomitantly with the underachievement "symptom."

In view of observations such as these, other investigators focused on a line of research to test the effects of group counseling in helping under-achievers to face their problems realistically in order that they might be freed for deeper learning experiences. Margolin (1955), Caplan (1957), Doering (1963), Garwood (1963), Collins (1962, 1964), Broedel et al. (1960), and Spielberger et al. (1962, 1964) were among the investigators interested in the group processes with students; their results showed discrepancies to some extent, and clear cut evidence for a female population was lacking.

The present study was undertaken in order to try to identify more clearly some of the motivational patterns in female underachievers and to test the effectiveness of group counseling with females in the light of particular 'need' patterns.

It was hypothesized (1) that students who participated in group counseling sessions would show greater improvement in grade point average than non-participants; (2) that students who participated in group counseling sessions would show greater improvement in self actualizing tendency than non-participants; (3) that students who participated in group counseling sessions would show greater improvement in self-ideal congruence than non-participants; and (4) that 'improvers' would show different motivational patterns than 'non-improvers.'

Forty-two underachieving senior high school students (female) volunteered to participate in a series of group counseling sessions. These Ss were divided into an experimental (N=21) and a control (N=21) group equated for IQ, previous grade point average, and self-ideal congruence. The former group was further divided into three subgroups whose members participated in 20 group counseling sessions held twice weekly. Pre and post assessments on grade point average, on self actualizing tendency, and on self-ideal correlation were made for both groups in order to determine what changes had taken place during the experimental period. Ss were also assessed for motivational patterns prior to the experimental period, and an analysis was made to determine which patterns were characteristic of Ss who improved as a result of counseling.

Upon completion of the study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Changes in grade point average occurring during the experimental period favored the counseled Ss, though the level of significance ($p .08$) fell short of that needed to reject the null hypothesis.

2. The amount of change between experimental and control groups on self actualizing values, self acceptance, and acceptance of aggression was significantly different ($.05$ level). Results favored the experimental group. There was also a tendency for the experimental group to show an increased spontaneity ($.10$ level) and a decreased reliance on others for their decisions ($.06$ level).

3. Students who participated in group counseling sessions showed a significant increase in self-ideal congruence over the control group ($.01$ level).

4. Counseled Ss who showed an improvement in grades after their group experience had significantly less 'need' for autonomy and intraception than those who did not improve.

These results give confirmation to the hypothesis that group counseling can be a beneficial experience for underachievers, though it affects them in many different ways depending on their own personality patterns and specific group interaction. The N was limited, and it would be well to test the same hypothesis with other populations. From the investigator's point of view, it would seem that future research in the area of group counseling should concentrate on volunteer groups and should allow for flexibility of subjects in dropping out of the group or in occasionally missing meetings. There is also still much need to do follow up research on adjustment of counseled Ss after the termination of the group sessions.

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Appendix I

Matching Criteria for Experimental and Control Groups

Experimental			Control		
G.P.A.	I.Q.	S-I	G.P.A.	I.Q.	S-I
2.84	123	.33	2.15	116	.64
1.38	115	.05	1.88	118	.16
2.07	127	.58	2.34	114	.61
2.51	121	.59	2.63	124	.73
1.95	127	.57	2.75	130	.28
1.48	129	-.16	2.70	134	.70
1.88	107	.28	2.42	129	.54
1.74	109	.68	2.05	120	.30
2.44	126	.66	1.57	115	.65
2.73	131	.51	2.25	123	.50
2.44	118	.72	2.20	117	.60
2.05	115	.36	1.91	117	.36
2.35	117	.79	1.58	115	.04
2.12	115	-.04	1.77	109	.73
2.13	129	.60	2.10	112	.45
2.86	126	.39	1.02	115	-.48
1.90	114	.50	1.54	118	.52
1.39	111	.54	1.56	101	.52
1.66	113	.61	1.75	102	.70
2.21	118	.42	2.46	112	.82
M	2.12	119.5	2.04	117.4	.51
SD	.44	7.1	.45	8.2	.37

Appendix II

Pre and Post Grade Point Averages

Experimental		Control	
Pre	Post	Pre	Post
2.84	2.40	2.15	2.00
1.38	1.12	1.88	1.88
2.07	2.00	2.34	2.12
2.51	2.20	2.10	2.10
2.37	2.40	2.63	2.70
1.95	1.60	1.57	1.58
1.48	1.40	2.20	1.90
1.88	2.00	2.25	2.10
		1.77	1.30
1.74	1.70	1.02	.90
2.44	2.00	2.26	1.70
2.12	1.70	2.75	2.40
2.73	2.50	1.58	1.98
2.44	2.50	1.91	2.20
2.05	1.80	2.70	2.30
2.35	2.50	2.42	2.00
		1.54	1.60
2.86	2.40	2.05	1.10
1.66	2.00	1.56	1.50
2.21	2.60	1.75	1.90
1.39	1.72	2.46	
2.13	2.10		
1.90	2.30		

Appendix III

Pre and Post Measures of Self-Ideal Congruence

Experimental		Control	
Pre	Post	Pre	Post
.33	.51	.64	.65
.57	.69	.16	.08
.05	.67	.61	.52
.59	.71	.45	.27
.28	.15	.73	.72
-.16	.22	.65	.64
.58	.61	.60	.75
.33	.64	.50	.28
		.73	.73
.68	.77	-.48	-.08
-.04	.50	.56	.73
.66	.65	.28	-.04
.41	.61	.04	-.12
.72	.88	.36	.30
.36	.45	.70	.62
.79	.69	.54	.59
		.53	.44
.39	.46	.30	.49
.61	.70	.52	.43
.42	.39	.70	.49
.54	.17	.82	.69
.60	.54		
.50	.42		

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Sister Mary Frederick Arnold, C.S.J. has been read and approved by five members of the Department of Psychology.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 19, 1966
Date
Ascension Thursday

Fred J. Kobler
Signature of Adviser